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THEOLOGICAL CRITICISMS.

OR HINTS OF THE

PHILOSOPHY OF MAN AND NATURE.

IN

SIX LECTURES.

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED

TWO POETICAL SCRAPS,

AND

DOGMAS OF INFIDELITY.

BY F. W. ADAMS, M. D.

MONTPELIER:
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ERRATA.

Page 75, 6th line, for if ignorant, read of ignorance.
" " 28th " for Pity, read Piety.
" 83, 8th " for Nature, read Matter.
" 87, 13th " for *the* propensities, read propensities.
" 88, last " for of, read or.
" 102, 2d " for Manatau, read Manatou.
" 108, 9th " for severitees, read severities.
" 110, 7th " for further, read any further.
" 115, last " for cowardice, read moral cowardice.
" 116, 2d " for threat, read threats.
" 132, 11th " for infringe, read impinge.
" 144, 21st " for Emphyrean, read Empyrean.
" 208, last " for general, read generous.

Jan. 17, 1902.
F.W.

TO THE READER.

Having been particularly known among my familiar acquaintances, and, reputedly, by the public within my vicinity, as an avowed dissenter from the literality and supernaturalism of the Scriptures, in which there seemed enough of singularity, to induce a curious individual to solicit, from time to time, during several years, a publication of my anti-theolgical opinions, to which however, circumstances forbade assent; until, at length, I was importuned by letter, at two several times, from a reverend disciple of Universalism, to make the curious disclosure: And hence concluded to comply, and, therefore, set about expending, occasionally, a leisure hour, in noting some few reflections upon the subjects of inquiry. This I was the more willing to undertake, from the clearest conviction, that Theology unconnected with Morality, was a phantom which had seduced or frightened the world into its most terrible and exterminating evils. And that even Christianity, in which Morality, as it seems to have been particularly intended, strikingly predominates over Theology, has been the subject and occasion of the most cruel and murderous dissention:

A consequence, it would be blasphemous to charge upon Truth or Reason. And having, from my childhood, detested the moral cowardice, so well exemplified in its character and consequences, by the fictitious Jonah, on the one hand; and, on the other, equally idolized the moral courage of the Hebrew Daniel, in whom this attribute is made so godly and momentous, as that miracles were reputedly performed to save the subject of so magnanimous a soul.

Hence, I resolved upon the hazard of a publication, in the form of a letter, or rather a series of letters, to the reverend solicitor; and which had made considerable progress toward its conclusion, when I was interrogated on behalf of some dozens of my friends, whether I would address them in a course of public lectures, upon the questions I had essayed to discuss in the letter series.

No other objector appearing, than that ignominious huzzy, who seduced Jonah to take lodgings in the stomach of a whale; and she being annihilated by a single scowl, the recollection of Daniel developed, my consent was given; and the letters adopted as the basis of the following essays, into which they were very conveniently transformed. And being subsequently solicited for the manuscript for publication, this little volume has come out to testify to my courtesy, sincerity and moral courage.

These lectures, though originating in specific inquiries, and therefore appearing to claim the character of specific answers, were nevertheless written, under the assumption of a general license, and are, there-

fore, designedly, rather elicitations to theological inquiry than solutions of numerous and reputedly mysterious problems. I would that every individual should not only have opinions upon all subjects of human interest, but that they should be sanctioned by Reason and justified by truth. And however harshly custom and expediency may growl at such opinions, as innovations upon hereditary rights, Experience, Posterity and Nature will ultimately and cheerfully accord their approbation!

One consideration, however, more than any other, which has embarrassed both the oral and typographical announcement of my peculiar dogmas, is that most plausible of all stupefactives to the genius of innovation, viz., that the present state of opinions and practices should not be unsettled upon any other prinprinciple, than that of the offer of a more valuable substitute.

Justice and generosity, both, emphatically demand a strict observance of this rule, whenever it falls within the power of the agent: And yet there are so many exceptions, as to embarrass, essentially, the authority of the rule; especially where one hypothesis is to be contested by another; and where Facts refrain, as much as possible, from giving evidence.

This embarrassment is at length overcome by the settled conviction, that Theology is not only a fiction, but that were it otherwise, it would be a dark and profitless subject for human contemplation; belonging as it does exclusively to God and his spiritual providence; and one that He would scarcely thank his creatures, for

assisting Him to manage. Beside, it seems most irrefragible, that Morality, the very Genius, Christ, or Savior, of Society, has been slandered, disparaged and trodden upon by this cloven-footed, leaden-headed progeny of Barbarism, until the very heart of Reason should burst with indignation. But so long as Ethics shall remain subordinate to a decrepid, fictitious Spiritualism, it will continue to be starved and scourged into a degraded dwarfishness and imbecility, wherein it vainly attempts to repel the indignities its effeminacy has elicited. Yes, whilst Ethics, which, with proper nourishment and care, is competent to rear the standard of literal salvation is destructively neglected, Theology is petted, for its fallacious promises of a future fiction.

Now, if Theology is a fiction, it is, at least, a waste of thought to contemplate it, and its influence must, after all the expense of its support, be nugatory or mischievous; hence the demand for a substitute needs not to be recognized. To reflect upon any thing that is, must be preferable to reflecting upon nothing at all. But, if it is not a fiction, it has both *God* and Nature to support it, and hence defies subversion.

Thus, is the Reader, not quite unceremoniously, introduced to our legitimate, dogmatical and hypothetical progeny, from which, as he cannot fail to observe, a foot, at least, has been amputated, for the convenience of the Printer; and perhaps not less to the satisfaction of the Reader; since, whatever lessens a deformity, proportionally improves it.

THE AUTHOR.

DOGMAS OF INFIDELITY.

Nature is an uncreated, indivisible and unlimited system of matter and functionality; whose eternity is no more difficult to admit, than that of an antecedent creator: Nor is humanity competent to acquire an earlier idea of things, than that which is expressed by the term, formation! Thus, when it is said that a thing is made, nothing more can be understood, than that a portion of preexisting material has assumed a new arrangement of its parts, or atoms, denominated, accurately, a new formation, but much more frequently, miscalled a new creation!

The idea of God is identical with that of ultimate causality, of which no other knowledge can be obtained, than that of its logical necessity, as a termination of all philosophic inquiry; and appears to be insusceptible of any better definition, than that it is another name for ignorance: For God is never referred to, whilst any apprehensible, specific cause remains available. And were there a God, detached from matter, with the attribute we call intelligence, in an infinite degree, the continuance of his being, beyond the pe-

riod of a single thought, would be entirely nugatory. Suppose a God, such as it may be thought Christianity hath assumed, and Plato's brain engendered of ultimate causality personified; and, subsequently, endowed with that trinity of attributes, called wisdom, power and goodness, so indispensable to such a character! Can there be a doubt, that wisdom, such as God's, and called of men omniscience, would scan successfully, the laws and their relationship, by which a world's phenomena were intended to be governed; or that a single thought would settle their arrangement? And who believes, that more than one determination of omnipotence, would be required to put those laws in operation?—Is God immutable?—He, therefore, would not modify his own decrees!—Is he omnipotent?—No other power could do it!—And hence, the supervisionship of such a God, would be as nugatory, as the idea of his being is fallacious!

Were it not an undefinable causality, of which mankind has wrought its deity; that dogma, without the aid of superhuman revelation, could never have become so universal as it has been; and doubtless would not have been acquired at all!—Hence, the universality of the idea of God is applicable only to such a principle; and not at all to that discrepancy of attributes, with which a diverse human fancy has endowed its personification.

Notwithstanding the existence of matter, like that of God, has readily obtained universal belief, it is, nevertheless, a problem, whose truth can never be demonstrated. It is, naturally, deducible from the ideas

it is supposed to develope, and the properties of which it is supposed to be the predicate, and yet its intrinsicality must, forever, elude investigation.

Matter may be supposed to possess an ultimate being and functionality; a state it may successively resume, in imitation of its original, at the termination of each complete revolution of its metamorphosis; and below which, it is incapable of reduction, or simplification.

Life is a supposed principle, to whose agency organic phenomena have been exclusively referred; and which may be contemplated in the triple character of ultimate, structural and functional.

Ultimate, or primitive life, may be defined, to be that connate, or coeternal, attribute of matter, upon which modification, or transformation, originally depends; and without which, as without ultimate causality, no phenomenon could ever occur. Structural life is that modification of ultimate life, upon which the arrangement of appropriate material, into specific organization, depends; from the mushroom to the mimosa, in vegetation, and from the sponge and polypus to man, in animation; in all of which, it may be rationally presumed, the parenchyma* is, organically, the same. Functional life is that which results from, and is characterized by, organization, upon which the two preceding kinds of life have been already employed; and

* By parenchyma is meant the common organized material of which particular organs are constructed.

is either constituent, as in particular organs, or aggregate, as in the whole animal; which latter state is denominated animal life, whereon are established the peculiar relations that exist, between sentient beings, and the objects of sensation.

Every phenomenon of the living animal is a modification of the state of organism, of which the phenomenon is a function; whether it be structural or animal—physical or psychological.

Whilst the action of a muscle developes the phenomenon of motion, that of the brain constitutes consciousness: And the inactivity of the one is denominated rest—of the other sleep. Psychology, therefore, consists of organic phenomena; and should never have been displaced, from its legitimate position, at the head of physical philosophy.

Metaphysics is no otherwise associated with, nor less dependent upon, anatomy and physiology, than mechanics, with, or upon, mechanism. And these, as well as all other sciences, are but deductions from facts, contemplated in their several legitimate relations.

Man consists, firstly, of a parenchyma, which is the common basis of all organism, to which are superadded, and of the same material, differently arranged, all those peculiar apparatuses, which constitute him, in the aggregate, a living, moving, sentient, conscious, enduring, and reproductive machine:—For, machine he is, notwithstanding his obstinate and egotistic adherence to the fallacious dogma, of freedom-of-the-will, upon which psychological phantom, M. Cousin,

the present supervisor of the classical literature of France, together with a host of infatuated disciples, has exhausted every hypothetical and sophistical resource. Nor will posterity deem it an abuse of his arguments that we denominate them mere blarney.

Nature is a system of adaptations, denominated cause and effect, within which, men and mushroons are equally included; and of equal importance, in its mysterious and interminable revolutions: Nor is man, with all his wild conceit of voluntary independence, one whit less subject to the dominion of physical and natural laws, than though he were a mass of unmodified material. Curious, that Nature should have formed an animal to take precedence of herself!

Organization is a structural arrangement of elaborated material, derived from the common stock of elements, and subsequently transmuted, by the agency of organic life, into the specific constituents of the specimen referred to—each intermediate order, between the two extremes of the graduated scale, being nourished by an inferior, and, in turn, yielding itself as the nourishment of a superior, and so on to the end of the chapter; presenting, thus, a series of revolving adaptive transmutation.—A circle, in which man and common matter ultimately meet; and which has been, theologically, misinterpreted, and erroneously propagated as infinite design.

Man, from the time of Socrates, has been contemplated, as consisting of body and soul—or of a material, physical organism, to which an immaterial, unorganized and immortal spirit is somehow, and at some period, superadded.

This dogma, of an immortal spirit, which Socrates had presented to the world, in a state of nudity, was zealously adopted, by the spiritual enthusiast, Plato, who, laboriously and ingeniously clothed up the fallacy, with all the fascinations of an invaluable truth; which, being thus presented to man's strongest propensity, his love of life, could, scarcely, have failed of a ready and unanimous acceptance. But unanimity of belief can never deserve credit, as evidence of scientific, or philosophic truth, since the mass, even of the intelligent portion of mankind, has been found, contentedly, groping, in the unprogressive routine of traditionary prejudice, and hereditary obstinacy, a half century, at least, behind the foot-prints of the Genius of social amelioration: Nor has it, ever, acquired a knowledge of those principles of science, to the truth of which, it has, finally, given a tardy assent. Mankind are, constantly, witnessing the phenomena, and participating the benefits, of science, of whose principles, they are as ignorant, as of the statistics of the moon: and yet, their vanity vociferates—"How wise our generation!"—Nor, meanwhile, think how insignificant have been their, or their father's, contributions to that stock of wisdom; nor how small a part they, individually, share!

Man consists of structural organism, and consequent functionality, of which brain and consciousness are important particulars: Nor is the latter, which is synonymous with soul, one whit more spiritual, than the elasticity of steel. He is, indeed, what reputed inspiration, a long time since, interpreted him—"a liy-

ing soul"—Or in other words, a thinking creature. It is written, Gen. 2. 7. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and *man became a living soul.*" And who can have been so stupid, as to have innocently interpreted this text of scripture, to mean that the soul of man is not a function of his organism, or that it was superadded, subsequently to such formation, while the text expressly declares the *man* to be the living soul?

Whilst reflection cannot miss a thousand evidences, that the soul is functional, exclusively; no counter one has been adduced, which might not be as well applied affirmatively.

Whilst Truth will never fail to repay the labor of investigation; Error, like a hibernating reptile, will sting the hand that warms it into vigor! Theology is a human fantasy, which possesses neither a type in Nature, nor affinity with Reason!

Natural Theology is an *unnatural* dogma, with which, affectation of piety has, abortively, attempted to relieve the accumulating embarrassments of a fictitious revelation!

Notwithstanding Christianity, as delineated in the Gospel, is, undeniably, a most successful compilation of the highest and purest metaphysical, moral and religious dogmas, of which the world was in possession at its date; it is, nevertheless, pregnant with fallacies too numerous and palpable, to escape the notice of an unprejudiced, modern school-boy!

The Gospel, which is, now, almost universally, be-

lieved to have been supernaturally communicated to mankind, through the incomprehensible medium of the fictitious Son of God, is cognizable, only, as a judicious and convenient compendium of the ancient Eclectic Philosophy, of which Philo, the Essen Jew, was an eminent disciple, and promulgator; and who, it may be well enough supposed, in his abundant affection for his national kindred, wrote out a copy, in his own peculiar style, and in the Jewish, allegorical manner, in the laudable hope, that it would be adopted, by his ignorant and superstitious brethren, as an invaluable substitute for the fallacies and bigotries of Judaism.

Christianity is compounded of Theology and Ethics; wherein the fantasms of the former, are sustained by the realities of the latter.

Whilst Ethics forms the most eminent department of Natural knowledge, nor needs an adjunct to sustain itself; Theology would, long since, have arrived at a state of insupportable decrepitude, had it been deprived of Ethics to lean upon!

Theology, in consonance with its own fictitiousness, has instituted a censorship of Faith, instead of Fact, which denominates all else, mere scoria of the truth, save what has passed, unscathed, the crucible of its fanaticism: It has, grimly, scowled at natural science, as an unholy obtruder upon its sanctimony, and a subverter of its superhuman truths; and has never failed to persecute the man, while living, nor to heap up obloquy upon his name, when dead, who has ever ventured to propagate a truth, that threatened a collision with the fallacies of its creed.

The whole superstructure of modern Theology is erected upon a Socratic or Platonic fiction of the human soul, which, both, fact and reason emphatically repudiate. And, if there were, both, God and soul, they would be inexplicable to humanity, and also themselves subjected to Zeno's Fate, or that Necessity, imposed by the laws of their nature.

Whilst the falsehood has been vociferously reiterated, throughout the wide domain of Christendom, that natural science owes to Christianity, its success; a counter truth is stamped on every page of civil history: And, if doubt remains upon this plain question, you are directed to enquire of the ghosts of Roger Bacon, Nicholas Copernicus and Galileo Galilei!

LECTURE I.

THE PRIMITIVE CHARACTER OF MAN.

Friends of Free Enquiry:—

It is not from the instigation of a love of notoriety, nor for the unenviable privilege of suffering persecution for a frank avowal of my peculiar heterodoxy, that I stand here this evening, as a traitor to my own popularity, as though I were insanely soliciting the honor of martyrdom; but in a self-distrustful obedience to your joint solicitation for a public disclosure of my personal views of some particular questions, in whose satisfactory solution, the world possesses a deeper interest than even the querulous obstinacy, with which they have been contested, indicates: And my first wish is, that you were in possession of a reasonable assurance, that your hope of edification is not altogether futile.

The peculiar character of the present enterprise seems to demand that this introductory lecture should consist mostly of its own preface, declarative of the sentiments by which we are actuated, and the objects

to be attained: And while I express the following personal views, I may hope that the heart of every auditor will beat an unequivocal response.

Man is allowed to have been born with certain inalienable rights and privileges, to which Nature has given him an irrevocable title: Nor is she, whatever its seeming, justly chargeable with partiality in the distribution of her favors.

If the philosopher is delighted with the success of his investigations; he is also annoyed with contemplating the narrowness by which they are limited: And whilst he regrets the insignificancy of his best acquirements, "the fool is happy, that he knows no more." Thus is the impartiality of Nature established, in respect of intellectual happiness. All rational political, philosophy concurs in admitting that all social privileges should be reciprocal—or that no individual shall claim a right to do, for and of himself, an act, from which any other individual, under similar circumstances, is prohibited.

Earth, air and water, with all their convertible products, are the common property of their human inheritors—and Wisdom emphatically declares, that such a distribution and use, should be made of them, as to insure the greatest amount of innocent enjoyment. And yet they are mostly monopolized, by a very small proportion of our species; nor would the air itself be excluded from the list, were it subject to the arbitrary regulation of meets and bounds: And the poor might gasp, or bend in servitude to its owner, for the material of vital respiration.

Air is, however, most fortunately free; nor is opinion, however unfortunately, less so.

To coerce opinion has, nevertheless, been arbitrarily, mischievously and abortively attempted by every generation that History has recognized: And millions have fought and bled and died in a contest, of which children should have been ashamed.

Opinion being the inalienable property of every individual, the acquisition of which can never be dishonest, nor its possession dishonorable, should never be assailed, but by the kindest expressions that successful invalidation will justify; nor attempted to be subverted, but with the commendable expectation of substituting a better.

Reason is the grand distinguishing characteristic of humanity; and is therefore appropriately subservient to its highest purposes: And the higher, and more abstract from mere propensity our objects are, the more is reason required in their examination: Whatever is above reason is above humanity; and whatever its influence upon the species, it can never become an object of consciousness. Nor is there a plausible proposition that suffers more from analysis, than a very popular one among the clergy; viz. "that revelation begins where reason ends; and yet, that reason clearly sees the need of such a revelation."

That the need of a circumstance should be clearly apprehended whilst its character is entirely unknown, is a proposition that cannot bear the slightest scrutiny. As well might the hungry be said to see the need of bread, before it was known to be nutritious.

But the world is full of this kind of sophistry, wherein sound is offered and accepted as a substitute for sense. Wherein unembelished Truth surrenders its rightful dominion to furbished and artful fallacy. Nor are men aware how easily they are deceived by high-sounding, though unmeaning sentences; nor how much nor often, familiar terms are perverted from their original and genuine interpretation, in order to subserve the purposes of a sect.

However differently the case may stand with others, it is clearly my own conviction, that Reason unequivocally discharges me from all responsibility, for either the possession or propagation of opinion. For if any individual has a right to express an opinion, whose accuracy is not already acknowledged by the public, that right belongs, equally, to the rest of the population. And if such a right were not acknowledged, and its practical consequences permitted, where, allow me to ask, would be found the history of human improvement?

When was the public ever known to suggest an improvement? or, an occasional genius having made an ameliorating suggestion, when was the public ever known, promptly, to afford it a practical illustration? Have not the originators of important improvements of the various interests of their species, slept, long and soundly, with their fathers, before their stupid successors have been able to appreciate the value of their suggestions? Alas! this public, that arrogates to itself the attributes of a god, marches, nevertheless, in the rearward shadow of that adventurous, invent-

ive Genius, to whom the world is irredeemably indebted—and whose statue, if ever wrought, is erected upon a pyramid of antecedent reproaches.

Reason, however fallacious, is the only guardian of human actions; nor should propensity, in any case, digress its most fastidious prescriptions. Yet, how differently has been the case with all successive generations—or history belies their character!

Man has been effectually shown up, as the creature of propensity, too indomitably obstinate for exhortation, or even experience, to improve. And still he rails, each against his neighbor, for the slightest scent of inconsistency, that the sensitive and obtrusive nose of suspicion is able to smell out, even, amongst the privacies of domestic life. Whilst he enviously and maliciously assails his neighbor's happiness, he ignorantly, though deservedly thwarts his own. His life is a succession of fears and disasters, that Reason, were her admonitions heeded, would enable him to evade: But, to her utter discouragement, man has superstitiously adopted a set of fictitious mysticisms, under the cognomen of Theology, by which she is nearly superceded in her highest vocation with humanity.

Start not at a mere declaration, which is of no moment whatever, unless supported by satisfactory argument; and which, when thus supported, must rightfully supercede its antagonist: For Truth, however threatening in the distance, is always peaceful in possession!

For myself, I am not ashamed to own, that I am a

devout disciple of Reason; and an anxious, however successless, inquirer after truth, whose homeliest physiognomy, however often and grossly misapprehended, is really more beautiful than error, with all its paint and furbishing.

Opinions being always honestly acquired, their consequences, however disastrous, are chargeable only as misfortunes, not as crimes.

Opinions, it is true, should be always right, since erroneous ones possess, more or less, untoward tendencies, from which Ignorance has taken occasion to excuse the exercise of its malevolence, wherein nothing but the kindest sympathy is justifiable.

The most unfortunate individual is he, whose happiness is most marred by the inaccuracy of his opinions; and he the most fortunate, the accuracy of whose opinions, most successfully, provides for his welfare.

A common error with mankind, is the too precipitate formation of opinion, whereby his best exertions work out his worst discomfiture. As with the traveler who misses his road, and is therefore the farther from his way, the longer and more expeditiously he travels. Hence opinion, should be deliberately and carefully formed, and as far as possible, founded in a clear apprehension of all the truths concerned in its institution. Thus, Truth becomes the primary and paramount object of human inquiry; and should neither be mistaken nor contemned, by arbitrary, obstinate prejudice, scarcely less blind to truth than to itself.

Whatever is seriously proposed as truth, should be patiently and carefully examined before it is rejected. Who would not declare it preposterous for a chemist to throw away, unexamined, a specimen of precious ore, because he is not already acquainted with its character? And opinions, with all their dependencies, deserve no less to be analyzed, than unexamined specimens of mineralogy. But superstitious prejudice, would crucify Innovation, though it were commissioned only to take from it the instruments of involuntary suicide.

Heterodoxy and Infidelity are terms scarcely less familiar than the names of our household goods. And yet, they ought never to have commanded the respect of an interpretation. They are epithets, that Ignorance, long ago, maliciously appended to imaginary offenses, against imaginary authority.

In the purest theological sense, the Grecian Socrates, the probable prototype of the reputed author of Christianity, was a heretic, in opposing, by the most conclusive arguments, the settled superstitions of his time and country. And if it were well, that he was sacrificed to the eyeless, conceited and obstinate genius of stability, whilst attempting to eradicate a mischievous and senseless mythology; then it was justifiable to crucify the reputed Son of God for attempting a similar innovation. Nor should a reproach rest upon the consistent obstinacy of the descendants of Abraham, though they had really murdered the Savior of the world. For it matters not, by whom good or evil is perpetrated, whether by demigod or diabolist,

The visionary Plato, whose theological cogitations, with very little revision, have been adopted by more than eighty generations, as the genuine oracles of Almighty God, was also a heretic: And, as a disturber of the public peace—an innovator upon established opinion, should have been early treated to a bowl of the lethean beverage, which had already made his tutor, Socrates, sleep so soundly, beneath a nation's audible regret, for so mischievious and diabolical a homicide.

Copernicus too, who brought forth from a chaos of fallacies, an astronomical system, apparently too deep for human cogitation; whereon he stood so far above cotemporary humanity, that he must have seemed, at that dark day, somewhat like an unearthly spirit, sent down to put these vagrant worlds in order, was, for this, condemned and excommunicated by the Romish Church, as a heretic and vilifier of the word of God. Nor did that Church acquire snfficient shame of its former godliness, to annul its worse than Irish *bull* against the philosopher, until 1821, or little less than three hundred years. A very short time, indeed, for Bigotry to relent, or Superstition to be enlightened. Or, to utter a very plain truth, this almost superhuman philosopher, to whom the world is more deeply indebted than any acknowledgment can reach, was persecuted and finally outlawed, by a church, that arrogated to itself both the wisdom and justice of God, for propagating opinions, which are, at present, so well and generally understood to be true, that an impugner of them, would be a butt for childish ridicule.

Did Galileo persist in scrutinizing Nature, until she deigned to repay his importunity with disclosures, she had hitherto denied to the most devoted of her admirers? Was not this incontinence to God, the Church and Stability, a deeper heresy than common men could perpetrate? So thought the Church, and therefore ordered its inquisitors to torture out the culprit's recantation, or his life! Did his firmness fail him, in this desperate contest between his principles and his fears? And did he yield, in base hypocrisy, to the clamor of the last, and humbly bend before the symbol of a fiction, and forswear himself upon the reputed oracles of God? And did shame for his duplicity, and compunction for what he deemed the basest sacrilege, goad up his manhood to a contradiction of his oath, at the hazard of interminable imprisonment, to which he was immediately sentenced?

And was it right that such men's and indeed any men's opinions, that happened to be inappreciable by the stupidity of the time, should subject them to death, unlimited imprisonment or excommunication, another name for outlawry, by which life was left at the disposal of any bigoted, ferocious villain, who should choose to take it? Then Paul and Stephen met justice in their deaths, and all were bound to sanction it with a hearty amen. Nor should a Zuinglius, a Luther, a Calvin, a Knox, with interminable and so forths, have escaped the hand of the executioner. And yet they lived to see the Romish Harlot shorn of many of her most seductive fascinations, and discarded by numerous, enthusiastic admirers:

And finally, to bequeath their names to Protestant Christendom, as objects of a superstitious and shameful idolatry.

Thus much for the irresponsibility of opinion, and the universal, reciprocal right, and incalculable utility of its promulgation.

The following remarks will be more particularly appropriated to the questions ofthe origin, and primitive character, of man.

There are, of the present generation of men, numerous, sincere worshipers of antiquity, and still more, pious venerators of the fallacies of the olden time; for whom I feel much more respect than for the stupid fancies by which they are distinguished.

Numerous hypotheses have been instituted in explication of the origin of mankind, which have been mostly stamped, not only, with a characteristic fallibility, but with the most palpable and disgraceful fatuity.

That man originally vegetated, or sprang up spontaneously from the soil, deriving nourishment from the earth, by means of fibrous appendages of his toes and fingers, until his progressive organism enabled him to extricate himself from his maternal attachments, and henceforth to commence a life of independent, voluntary exertion, is a theory scarcely plausible enough to secure its immediate and general adoption. Nor is it much more plausible, that our primitive ancestor was a chattering baboon, whom progressive cultivation succeeded, at length, in transforming to a human being. And, were it true, it

would nevertheless fail to afford a satisfactory solution of our problem. The same difficulty would rest with the question, whence came the baboon?

And when we contemplate the Mosaic account of the same phenomenon, in the light of modern philosophy, it seems but little better than an unnatural aggregation of uncomely protuberances, whose deformity should not escape the superficial scrutiny of childhood. And however thankless, it may not be altogether unprofitable, to spend a few criticisms upon this very popular hypothesis.

The reader of the Mosaic account finds, that "in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Although this is a reputed specimen of divine revelation, it would seem, that no extraordinary, human ingenuity were required for the attainment of so simple a reflection. Fatuity itself would scarcely have overlooked the necessity of the earth's existence, antecedently to that of its products. This text might therefore escape a formal criticism, but for its illegitimate connexions, and a question it involves about which the world has already expended a great deal of uncandid altercation, viz., whether God created the material of the world, or that he merely formed it out of a material already existing? There would seem to be nothing further required for the satisfactory disposal of this question, than that the inquirer should make an effort to attain the idea of something having been made out of nothing; and that he shall cease his importunity until he shall have succeeded in the attempt.

The connections referred to, demand a more serious examination. Revelation declares, that "the earth was without form and void." And wherefore should God have thus created it? Is it a plausible suggestion, that God should have created a formless world, in order to display his ingenuity in remodeling it? This would hardly be admitted as a specimen of ordinary, human wisdom. Is it not then a better interpretation of the text, that God formed, out of the materials already existing in a chaotic state, the system of things as it at present exists? It certainly appears thus to me.

Again. "And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." This being relieved of its tautology would read thus. And darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved thereon: For doubtless, in this text, deep and waters are synonymous terms. The purpose, for which the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, seems not to have been considered important, or not well understood, by the revelator, else he would, most likely, have noticed it. The expression may possibly contain more poetry than truth; which however is quite unessential.

There appears to be no little difficulty in apprehending what waters were referred to in the text under consideration, since the elements are represented to have been in a state of chaos, or confusion, until the second day, when "God said let there be a firmament, in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the

waters from the waters," which was accordingly done; "and the waters which were *under* the firmament were divided from those which were *above* the firmament." "And God called the *firmament Heaven.*"

It may be well, here, to examine the facts referred to in the foregoing quotation. And firstly of the firmament, which divided the upper and nether waters, and must, therefore have been a material partition, set up in the atmosphere, at a specific distance from the surface of the earth.

Ask of the children in the street, who have been a dozen years under a kind and intelligent guardianship, what they understand of the firmament, or sky, and they will doubtless answer, that it is an imaginary concavity, whose radius, or semi-diameter, is measured by the extent of individual vision; and that it is, therefore, nothing but a mere distance in space, and that too as different as is the capacity of different eyes. Now if God made the firmament, such as we understand it to be, he was certainly, for once, most unprofitably employed; that is, in making nothing.

Again, it may be asked, what waters were above this ideal firmament; and for what purpose were they reserved? These same children would unhesitatingly answer you, that there is no humidity of the atmosphere, at any hight, but what is derived from the waters of the earth by the process of evaporation; and hence that the firmament, were it ever so real and substantial, could not have been designed for the purpose, the revelator has imputed to it; so that whatever other knowledge Inspiration had afforded him, it had

left him totally ignorant of the subjects of his revelation.

We find that on the third day of creation, "God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together, unto *one* place, and let the dry land appear." "And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he seas."

It would seem, therefore, that gravitation is not a principle inherent in matter, but was instituted for the especial purpose of making water run down hill, in order that it should be accumulated in the superficial hollows of the earth. And with this principle also, the revelator seems not to have been very well acquainted.

This divine record also informs us that, upon the fourth day of creation, God made the sun, moon and stars, and set them in the firmament, to give light upon the earth; to rule over the day and over the night; and to divide the light from the darkness.

Criticism finds no lack of food in this relation, to set its teeth upon.

We find in the commencement of creation, that God created light, and that it was good; that he divided it from the darkness, and called the light day, and the darkness night; and that the evening and the morning were the first day. Three days, therefore, or as most, learned theologians will have it, three epochs of a thousand years each, transpired before these planetary luminaries were created. Now, it would seem, since these were understood by infinite wisdom to be indispensable to the system of which

the earth is a very insignificant component, that he would have practiced the economy of providing them in season, to have answered his earliest purpose. And to corroborate this suggestion, it is proverbial that the strictest economy is observed in all the operations of Nature. Hence the apparent singularity, that God should have wasted a single effort of almighty power, as the above circumstance would indicate.

Geological researches have already raised many serious doubts, amongst the educated, both clergy and laity, whether these great, Mosaic, creative, terrestrial phenomena, absolutely and successively transpired, in the short space of one hundred and forty-four hours, or six days; and therefore attempt to obviate their embarrassment, by the futile, if not contemptible, hypothesis, that those days were geological eras, or periods of, at least, a thousand years each. By this expedient they have created a dilemma, that affords the theological wiseacre, the amplest opportunity, for the display of his sophistical jugglery. For, consonant with this dogma, the whole vegetable kingdom must not only have subsisted, during a thousand years, without the invigorating, and at present indispensable influence of sun-light, but without any light at all, during the somewhat protracted night of five hundred years. This is a bone for him to gnaw, whose mental hunger has made him desperate.

I would be allowed a word more in addition to a foregoing remark upon the firmament, which God himself declared to be Heaven, or the revelator was grossly mistaken. For it is thus written, in the eighth

verse of the first chapter of Genesis: "And God called the firmament Heaven." This appears to be a definition of heaven, that spiritualists have entirely overlooked, or flagitiously neglected, in the construction of their systems; and apparently involves them in an inextricable dilemma.

If Moses has not misrepresented God, nor God misapprehended his subject, heaven is a nullity. For, as has been already suggested, modern science has demonstrated the firmament to be only the termination of vision, in an unobstructed atmosphere. Hence it should have constituted an article, in every creed of spiritualism, that the only heaven God has reared, is built of man's imagination.

Whenever the subject shall have been fairly examined, it may be reasonably anticipated, that the ideas associated with heaven and hell, originated in a total ignorance of astronomical facts.

During several thousand years of human history, the earth was supposed to be circular, and as flat as a trencher, but of very uncertain thickness; over which was erected a substantial canopy or firmament, that covered its upper or habitable surface, like a tent, of which Josephus, the interpreter of the Jewish scriptures, thus writes, more than half a century after the commencement of the Christian era: "He (God) also placed a crystaline firmament round it, and put it together in a manner agreeable to the earth, and fitted it for giving moisture and rain, and for affording the advantage of dews." This is an explicit avowal of the opinion, that rains and dews were transmitted

by the firmament, from a fountain of water sustained upon its upper surface. And whilst you deem this opinion too futile for grown-up children ever to have adopted, let me tell you that it was no less judicious than most of the philosophic opinions of the great Lord Bacon, nearly sixteen hundred years after.

Notwithstanding the unavoidable admission of a deep and gloomy cavern beneath the earth, it remained entirely unappropriated, to any human purpose, until the doctrine of spiritualism, or the soul's immortality and accountability, was instituted in Greece, about four hundred years before the Christian era, when it was converted into a residence for the disembodied spirits of unjust men, and denominated ades or hades, in the English translation hell, and doubtless a corruption of the Hebrew hull, a word denoting infirmity, pain, misery, &c.

On the contrary, the imaginary region above the firmament, was supposed to be constantly illuminated, with an atmosphere of light and odor, especially adapted to the felicity of God, and the spirits of just men.

Now you have no difficulty in apprehending the entire fallacy of these ancient opinions; nor the utter absurdity of respecting, or even retaining, terms, which science has rendered, not merely ambiguous, but absolutely nugatory.

It has been long since demonstrated that, with respect to the inhabitants of the earth, nothing is permanently above or below them; but every thing both, in a series of diurnal succession. Hence the express-

ions, so familiar with Theology, Heaven above and Hell beneath, possess too little meaning, to be at all impaired by a direct transposition.

Again. "And God set them (the sun moon and stars) in the firmament," &c.

It is unnecessary that you should be reminded of the gross, astronomical ignorance, indicated by this expression. You are aware that, as very accurately computed, the distance of the sun from the earth is ninety-five million of miles, nearly, and that the moon, though nearest to the earth of any of the planetary bodies, revolves at a mean distance of two hundred and thirty-seven thousand miles. Now, to say nothing of the distance of the fixed stars, which is altogether too great for trigonometry to compute, it must be a very transparent material, of which the Mosaic firmament was composed, to transmit light, with the splendor of the sun, a distance equal to that between the sun and the moon's orbit, or forty-four million seven hundred and sixty-three thousand miles. And if it would take a ball, as fired from a cannon, twenty-six years to reach the sun, and it is thus computed, it would be a tedious time, in a drouth, before we should be drenched from such a distance, beside the danger to all living organism from the velocity a rain-drop would have acquired in such a descent.

Omitting any further remarks upon the manner in which the human race was primitively introduced upon the earth, a subject, upon which speculation may, as abortively exhaust itself, as upon a literal and substantial Trinity, we will pass on to the princi-

pal subject of our discourse, or the primitive state of man as revealed in the following text, Gen. 1. 27. "So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Here the questions very forcibly obtrude themselves: In what respect did man resemble his maker? Whether in his physical, or intellectual character, or both?

If we admit the accuracy of the Mosaic account of God, we are constrained to admit his very near resemblance to humanity, and that not of the most exalted character.

That he was corporeal and organized, is most clearly deducible from the physical phenomena it is said he performed, such as seeing, hearing, talking, walking &c. And that his intellect resembled man's, is no less clearly deducible, from numerous instances of its imbecility, of which notice will be taken as they successively occur. But if Adam and Eve, as they are represented to have been at their creation, really resembled God, his worship must be somewhat humiliating to rational creatures.

If we should forego our criticisms of the, apparently, inevitable embarrassments, attending the admission that God is a physical being, which, most certainly, with respect to the attribute of omnipresence, must occasion, either from his bulk or hustle, very serious inconvenieuce to the existence, or harmony, of his creation, and contemplate his intellectual and moral character, as represented by our first parents, we can scacrely charge a dissent from his wor-

ship, as an unpardonable sacrilege, or even an unreasonable neglect. The innocence of the primitive pair is made to depend upon their ignorance, which prohibited their knowing good from evil. And yet they were in possession of propensities, for whose direction, knowledge or instinct was indispensable, as the reputed catastrophe sufficiently proves. Their curiosity and credulity were also proportioned to their innocence, whereby they were ruinously imposed upon by the misrepresentation of a snake. Now, you would not, deliberately, recognize these, as consistent attributes of a God, notwithstanding Hebrew ignorance shall have thus described them: You would doubtless sooner distrust it as a fable; and as having originated with some human egotist, who thought so smartly of himself, that, therefore, God would choose to be like him.

Subsequently, we read, "And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat." Query. Did original transgression so strangely modify the constitution and principle of both animal and vegetable nature, that a thousand articles designed for nutrition, should thus become dangerous and fatal poisons? Or is it not more likely to be a specimen of the ignorance of that early time?

With these very liberal criticisms of the first chapter of Genesis, we will pass to the second, wherein are several propositions, upon which a generous criticism may be profitably exercised.

And I hope you will think my claim to your indulgence justifiable, while I continue to examine the Mosaic evidences of the primitive character of man, that being our subject, and this its most popular history.

In the first verse, we read, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished," &c. Man having been made as the last labor of the six day's creation, both male and female. And in the second verse it is declared that God rested from all his work of creation, upon the seventh day, which he blessed and sanctified. Hence it must be settled, if our text is true, that nothing has been subseqently created. Omitting all counter geological circumstances, the following difficulty is, nevertheless, to be in some manner obviated, in order to leave the subject as clear as divine revelation ought to be.

We find it repeated in verse 7, That the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground &c., and that he subsequently planted the garden of Eden; and took the man and put him therein, to dress and keep it—meanwhile prohibiting the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which was equivalent to saying, He should continue forever in his state of infantile ignorance, or purchase knowledge at the expense of a terrible retribution. Or in other words, that he should either be a fool or be damned. After this, as in verse 19, God indulged his curiosity, by bringing all the creatures he had made unto Adam to *see* what he would call them. And Adam gave to these many thousands their several appropriate names.

And this ceremony of passing so many creatures in review before Adam, must have occupied no little time.

The poor man was nevertheless thus far, a bachelor. And perhaps some suspicious persons may doubt whether he did not afterwards repent, that he had not continued so. After all this, however, God manufactured Eve from one of Adam's ribs. The difficulty therefore is in reconciling the fact of the entire creation having been accomplished in six days, including man, both male and female, and yet that the first woman was not made until a long time afterward, at least until the eighth day, leaving a Sabbath interval, or era, as modern theology will have it, of a thousand years: By which time Adam could not have been at all too young to marry, nor yet too little childish to refrain.

Omitting several circumstances recorded in this chapter, which are not particularly relevant to our present subject, to which however I shall immediately recur, I will pass it, with a single remark upon the last verse, which declares that they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed, showing, conclusively, that modesty is not instinctive, but merely social, or conventional, with our species. And thus it seems to be with every moral virtue. Ignorance, although it may afford excuse for wrong, does not insure, nor is itself, a virtue. But on the contrary it may well be called the mother of all moral mischief, as is clearly proved by the catastrophe it is said to have early wrought with human nature.

We are told, in the commencement of the succeed-

ing chapter, that the serpent was, not only, the most subtle of the *beasts*, (a very singular classification of the reptile) but that, (more singular still) he talked familiarly in human dialect; and although truly one of God's good creatures,

> With infidel temerity, gave God the lie;
> And swore that Eve might eat the fruit, nor surely die:

And thus succeeded with an ignorance and inexperience, that God must have, purposely, prepared for the occasion, since omniscience could not have misapprehended the result, nor the circumstances upon which it depended. It must have been a most singular state of things, when snakes knew more than folks! And yet the case was so, or this reputed revelation is a fable. In either case my point is gained: That is, to show the ignorance of primeval manhood; which must have been extreme, if Moses told the truth. Or, if the story is a fable, it shows still more; viz. That ages of observation, experience and human intercourse were wasted upon our stupid race: For surely the inconsistencies, fallacies and even absurdities of this Mosaic history, leave no room to doubt, that the writer, in comparison with a common clown of the present time, was verily a blockhead. And if, meantime, the wisest of his species, no doubt his ancestors, and may be his cotemporaries, knew less than snakes.

To corroborate this, apparently, severe remark, a few brief additional references will be presented, including some of the omissions we have made in chapter second.

In the third chapter and fourth verse, it is thus written: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

Now, at the time, when the prohibition of the fruit was communicated, (and we do not read that it ever was repeated,) Eve was not abstracted from the costal furniture of her intended spouse, and therefore must have learned of him, or the lying serpent, all she knew of God's especial interdiction.

But suppose Adam to have been God's messenger to his wife, of which, however, no hint is given, the problem must have been still, with her, whether Adam or the serpent told the truth. And if it were supposable, that Adam could, thus early, have abused the confidence of his better half, as grossly as the after custom has, too often, been, had Eve believed the serpent, or the devil, sooner than her spouse, she scarcely could have been culpable.

We find the following declaration, chap. 2. v. 5 & 6. "For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground." But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." And then God planted the garden of Eden, having, v. 7, just formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life, &c. The earth therefore had not been watered from the time that the seas were formed, viz., at the beginning of the third day, and at the close of which, vegetation had occurred, "and God saw that it was good. Here the question very naturally presents itself, How long had

this drouth continued antecedently to the mist above referred to? And how should vegetation have been thence affected? Vegetation is declared to have occurred upon the third day, or the same in which the waters were drained from the more elevated portions of the earth; and whereon the dry land first appeared after its creation. Now if the mist occurred, as it seems to have done, to promote vegetation in the garden where Adam was to be immediately placed, it must have been upon, or after, the sixth day of creation. And one of the two interpretations must be admitted as applicable to this strange relation. Either this interval consisted, according to any plausible interpretation, of some three revolutions of the earth upon its axis, or about 72 hours, or of three geological eras of a thousand years each, which certainly would be no slight consideration in the case in question. For admitting that God made the earth out of nothing, it seems to have consisted of a miscellaneous admixture of its constituent elements during one or two of these periodical revolutions at least, and was entirely covered with water until the third, leaving, as above remarked, three other revolutions, up to the creation of man. Now if these revolutions, days or epochs, consisted of twenty-four hours each, or seventy-two in the whole, the earth having been so lately and thoroughly drenched, could scarcely suffer from a drouth so soon, nor other than aquatic vegetables thrive lustily. And on the other hand, if those eras were each a thousand years, and

a drouth had lasted during three of them, it seems a moisture would have been difficultly raised from such a parched and desert surface.

And then, a moisture taken from the earth, could do no more by its return, than to supply the loss it must have first occasioned. And, if this process were necessary in Eden, already watered by the sources of four of the largest rivers in the world, a general barrenness must have destructively prevailed; and have rendered a new creation indispensable, unless Nature were possessed of the power of procreation, which seems to be clearly though strangely insinuated in the fifth verse of the chapter we are considering; and upon which we shall hereafter more particularly remark.

"And a river went out of Eden, to water the garden; and from thence it parted and became into four heads." Here we find ourselves embarrassed by the following queries. If the river went *out* of Eden, to water the garden, could the garden, nevertheless, have been in Eden, as it is declared to have been, in a preceding verse of the same chapter? And if not, at what distance and in what country east of that imaginary one, denominated Eden, was it most likely situated? Or was it located only in the imagination of the writer? And again. How are we to understand the declaration, that the river of Eden *parted* into four *heads* as it passed *onward*, consistently with our present notions of that subject? It is certainly, no ordinary occurrence, that a stream should divide itself into four larger ones, which this must have

done, if there is any meaning to the reputed revelation. The *only* rivers to which this text can have any consistent allusion, are the Euphrates and Tigris, nor do they form a junction until one of them has traversed a distance of nearly fourteen hundred miles. At this junction, however, theologians have thought fit to place the fictitious Eden, together with the two additional, fictitious rivers.

It may not be amiss, to enquire also, how it happened that Eve, in her reputed ignorance, should have so highly appreciated the knowledge of good and evil, or that Gods were happier than men, as that it should have become a motive to such preposterous disobedience. And the serpent not having told her, that wisdom was worth possessing, how very singular that she should have had a desire for it!

But the fruit was eaten, and their eyes were opened to a recognition of their nakedness. And wherefore? Was it because the nakedness, in which God had placed them, was an evil, a sin, or shame? Then it seems that God should have earlier supplied them with garments of skins, from his own manufactory; as we are informed he afterwards did, when they had, however, already learned to manufacture for themselves, and were therefore in less need of his assistance. Another query very naturally arises:—Whether the formal communication between God and his creatures, was consistent with any rational idea of the Creator of the Universe? Or was it not rather indicative of human childishness; or, at least, an ignorance of which children should now be ashamed?

In the curse pronounced upon the serpent, there is a problem of no very easy solution, viz: What sort of locomotion did the serpent perform; and by what sort of apparatus was it effected, previous to the execution of the curse? And wherefore, was the serpent cursed, for saying what he could not have known was false, unless he were omniscient, or most unreasonably familiar with his maker for such a lying, traitorous reprobate. But what would seem the oddest part of this most singular narration is, that this infernal reptile, having much more wit than man, and hence much more responsibility, and having also most diabolically seduced God's favorites, to a willful disobedience of his positive command, and thus transferred his only hope and heritage, interminably, to the devil, should have been merely sentenced to that peculiar mode of locomotion, to which his organism had already inevitably doomed him; and that he should thenceforth subsist, exclusively, upon a diet which he has never eaten, but which was anciently believed to be mostly, if not entirely, the creature's subsistence: And had the writer of the revelation known, that snakes have none, or moveless eyelids, he would, doubtless, have made their winkless eyes an item of the curse.

We see that this transgression wrought strangely with both the Deity and his works, eliciting a curse, that changed the state and character of creation. Why not indulge the query then, wherefore God should not have hindered the transgression, apparently so easily performed, rather than have wasted so

much almighty skill, in remodeling his affairs, and in finally obviating, at the halves, the eternal consequences of one poor, ignorant man's delinquency?

It seems to have been no small mistake of the divine revelator, that he contemplated labor as a curse; whilst it doubtless contributes, aside from its pecuniary attainments, much more than all things else, to human health and happiness. The very necessity too, which the fall is said to have engendered, is the sole circumstance, upon which the development of man's physical and intellectual energies depend. But for this, he would never have emerged from the lethean stupidity—the slough of barbarism, in which he must have been originally immersed.

"And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." In this particular therefore, man was not made in the likeness of God; but, by a most heinous transgression, he unluckily attained it. And lest he should partake of the tree of life &c. he was driven out of the garden, whose entrance was subsequently defended by a much more miraculous process, than to have corrupted the fruit, and blasted the tree, for which the miracle was instituted.

Thus have I adverted to some of the evidences afforded by the three first chapters of the Pentateuch, of the characteristic ignorance and imbecility of the early specimens of our race. Nor should it be deemed discourteous, that Josephus calls his ancient brethren savages. For so, without a doubt, they were; nor thus unlike all human nature, unwhipped, unschooled by long, calamitous experience.

I am aware, that the slight criticisms I have made upon the Bible, will work my serious disparagement, with all its superstitious votaries, who shall have learned the fact. And yet I have the temerity to pursue and propagate them, carefully and fearlessly to the last recorded fantasm of the Christian revelator: And for the sole purpose of eliciting and reciprocating truth and its legitimate deductions, upon a subject which hitherto, has seemed to cost a great deal more than it has been worth. In this however I know my liability to mistake; and will therefore invite all counter criticism, and make my frank acknowledgment, for every fallacy my opponent shall detect me in. Nor should he, with all his faith in revelation, be frightened at a snarling human criticism; but breathe with still more freedom, as he feels that truth will thus be more clearly and abundantly elicited. If God or Nature owns theology as true, imbecile man will no less vainly, seek its controversion, than he will his own best good in practicing licentiousness. And if it is a fiction, however brilliantly illusive in the gloom, it will, nevertheless, like an *ignis faluus*, allure its votary from the plain, direct and safe highway, wherein right reason charges man to prosecute his earthly journey, and leave him to innumerable annoyances, he might otherwise avoid.

Had our race pursued, for eighteen hundred years, a fearless, vigilant and unprejudiced search for the truths of Nature, instead of spiritual phantoms, it might now, with some good show of plausibility deny its reputed primitve consanguinity with the ape.

LECTURE II.

THE PRIMITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF MAN.

Not having had sufficient opportunity, upon a former occasion, to finish my remarks, upon the primitive character of man, which I had adopted as the subject of my discourse, I am constrained, at this time, to solicit your attention to a few additional ones.

History, both sacred and profane, explicitly declares the primitive state of man, whenever and wherever he has been thus found, to have been one of degraded, savage ignorance and ferocity. Nor could it have been otherwise, unless he were, once, supernaturally endowed with what he now acquires by study and experience. And this is a subject, we hope to live, hereafter, to discuss.

In addition to the testimony afforded us, by navigators, travelers and missionaries, from the renowned Christopher Columbus downward, of the ignorance, barbarism, and even cannibalism of the natives of our own continent, and of the numerous islands of the Pacific ocean, which ought to afford satisfactory corroboration of our remark, we have abundant other,

more ancient and perhaps more satisfactory historical evidence, that we can conveniently adduce, to the same point.

England, or more anciently, Britain, or Albion, when first visited by the Romans, about half a century before the Christian era, was inhabited by a race of savages, either naked, or but partly clothed with the skins of beasts, the earliest kind of covering, next to fig-leaves, ever adopted by our species, and in the case of our first parents, as has been before alluded to, manufactured by God himself, they being known, or supposed to be, incapable of doing it themselves. These savage islanders were divided into numerous petty tribes, each being governed by a chief of its own electing, under whose direction they were, more or less of them, almost unremittingly engaged in ferocious and exterminating conflicts. They were hunters, or roving herdsmen, without any knowledge of agriculture; and debased by the most absurd and Druidical superstition; in whose rites, scores of human beings were offered at a time, in their diabolical sacrifice to an imaginary God. And these pagan, unclad deer-hunters—these literal cannibals of nineteen hundred years ago, were the lineal ancestors of the present demigods of the cliff-bound isle, whose literary fallacies we are fain to mouth; and whose fashionable absurdities we aspire to imitate. Nor does history speak better of the early character of their continental neighbors, than of themselves. And that, even, God's reputed favorites, the Jews, were once in the same predicament, as other uncultivated sava-

ges, is evident, not only from the testimony of the Jewish historian, but from the infallible source of divine revelation, wherein we find, that they, though under God's especial guidance and instruction, were no less Pagans, Polytheists, and detestable desecrators of both Reason and Justice, in the particular of human sacrifice, than any of those Gentile infidels, whom God so deeply cursed for Hebrew benefit. Did not Rachel steal her father's household gods, and subsequently escape detection, by a much less honest than ingenious artifice, although that would scarcely have succeeded with a Catholic inquisitor? Did not the idolatry of his brethren so enrage the godly leader of the Jewish Exodus, that he brake the graven tablets of his God; nor knew, that such an invaluable bequest would be repeated. Does not each Hebrew record, from Genesis to Chronicles, inclusive, declare idolatry to have been the crying, and almost unremitted sin of God's elected nation, for more than eleven hundred years? The Hebrews, then, form no exception to the rule, that savages are idolaters. And have you heard it from the sacred desk, as all, most surely, should have done; nor so seldom either, as that it shall have been forgotten, that this peculiar, pious people believed that God was pleased with human sacrifice, a sign of deepest moral degradation? However careful Theology has been to let this question rest, without a comment, or a breath so free, as that it might awake the sleeping dragon, there stands a witness of its own, amidst its treasured oracles, that says, emphatically, the thing is true! "None

devoted," (for sacrifice) "which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death." Thus we find, that one of the ordinances that God imposed upon the Levites, or holy priesthood, was to sacrifice human beings under certain circumstances, without the right of redemption at any rate whatever. And if corroboration is demanded, we will refer you to the fulfillment of Jeptha's vow, in which he promised the Lord, if he succeeded in his invasion of the Ammonites, that whatsoever came forth of the doors of his house to meet him, on his return, should be consecrated to Him, and offered up for a burnt offering. We think that Incredulity itself, would be ashamed to demand further corroboration of the truth of our remark. And to leave no doubt of a Hebrew Polytheism, or that religion which includes a catalogue of inferior deities, or subordinate gods, you have only to avail yourselves of a single fact, viz: That their language includes a nomenclature, of the kind in question, amongst which are the following: Elihoreph, God of winter or of youth; Eliashib, God of conversion; Elijah, God of strength; Eliphalet, God of deliverance; Elisha, God of salvation; Elishah, God of help; Elmodam, God of measure; Ishmael, God that hears; Tabeal, God of goodness; Uriel, God of fire. Again we have the following, wherein father is synonymous with God, viz: Abidah, Father of knowledge; Abidan, Father of judgment; Abiezer, Father of help; Abihail, Father of strength; Abijam, Father of the sea; Abilene, Father of mourning, or of grief; Abinadab, Father

of willingness; Abinoam, Father of beauty; Abishalom, Father of Peace; Abishua, Father of salvation; Abishur, Father of uprightness; Abital, Father of the dew; Abitub, Father of goodness; Abiud, Father of praise; Abner, Father of light; Absalom, Father of Peace. Again, Baal-perazim, God of divisions; Baal-zebub, God of the fly, &c.

Here we close our evidence of the primitive barbarism of the human race, which we think should be satisfactorily received by any candid enquirer.

"The proper study of mankind, is man!"

So wrote the poetic philosopher, Alexander Pope, whose works have successfully defied the most laborious attempts at emulation, for more than a hundred years. And yet we venture to suggest, that the study of man would be too limited and monotomous to compensate the trouble of its prosecution, were it not associated with that of other numerous phenomena, with which he stands in a more or less intimate relation. The proper study of mankind seems, therefore, that of the phenomena of nature, where man belongs, and where he rightfully claims precedence.

Nature is to be contemplated, as a magnificent work-shop, wherein a few primitive principles are enabled, by indefinite modification, to produce the innumerable, and interminably diversified phenomena of the material world; which phenomena in the character of so many transformations of the matter of the universe, clearly illustrate, that its parts are in a perpetual state of action and reaction upon each other. And, strange as it may appear, it is becoming a ques-

tion of no inconsiderable interest and plausibility, among the simplifiers of science, whether electricity, variously modified by successive and peculiar circumstances, is not the exclusive principle, upon which all the phenomena, or changes of Nature, depend. It would be, doubtless, premature, however, to settle this question either way, at present. At any rate, corroborative facts ought to be much more abundantly accumulated, before the affirmative of this proposition can be safely adopted, as a valid corollary of physical science.

It is true that Nature, with all her infinitude of resources, is, nevertheless, economical of her principles and expenditures; squandering nothing by inadaptness, inadequacy, or superfluous multiplication of causes: And whatever number of laws she has instituted, their simplicity has been a subject of agreeable surprise, to all who have, fortunately discovered them.

As spectators of Nature's phenomena, our vision with all its artificial aid, is comparatively limited to a mere point; and yet that point is much too pregnant with variety, for man's successful inquisition. For what is all our pictured firmament, though its radius were measured by a Herschel's telescope, compared with worlds interminably piled on worlds? And then again, each drop, of yon transparent, rippling brook, though but a mimic world, is, notwithstanding, crowded with a countless, living population that defies no less our vulgar scrutiny, than does the nature of the laws that formed it.

What then, must be the insignificance of individual, yea of aggregate, humanity, in attempting to direct or modify the phenomena of an infinite creation, or even to apprehend the intrinsic character of the laws that govern them?

Human imbecility is more than proverbial, whenever it is employed upon a subject as magnificent as Nature's greatest, or as intricate as her minutest products. Nor less than thus, whenever it would invade the recess of ultimate causality.

But it would seem, that Nature intended to compensate for the barrenness of our discrimination, by the fertility of our imaginations; thereby enabling us, with all desired facility, to transport ourselves, from this matter-of-fact world of disagreeable realities, to an imaginary one, fruitful of the happiest fictions.

However imbecile are the human powers, or however circumscribed is the theater of human enterprise, there are, nevertheless, many circumstances, with which man may, and should, become acquainted: Nor are they rendered unimportant, by an insignificance disproportioned to his own. They are well adapted to his situation and capacity: Nor has Nature ordained a phenomenon, that is not emphatically great, to little man. Yes; so great is the least, that Nature ever deigned to present, that it is intrinsically, and in its ultimatum, as incomprehensible as infinity itself. It is not, therefore, with ultimate principles nor primary states of matter, that human cognizance has to do: They are indefinitely removed beyond the limits of finite scrutiny; and are known only as deductions

from secondary phenomena: And these are the circumstances that occupy exclusively, the whole field of human observation; and constitute the only materials of human knowledge.

All genuine science, therefore, consists in a knowledge of specific and comparative facts, and inferences legitimately deduced therefrom; and hence can be acquired in no other manner, than by observation and reflection. Nor can the latter be exercised, but upon the materials already provided by the former. And in this circumstance is to be formed a solution of the problem of the tardy progress of intellectual improvement. Nothing promises greater indulgence of human curiosity than literary antiquarianism; nor anything more gratifying to the literary speculator, than a concise, but judiciously compiled history of the progress of human knowledge from its primitive barbarism to its highest, present elevation: Nor should it be doubted, that a competent genius could not be more usefully and profitably employed, than upon such an enterprise. And you will permit me to express my regret, at the want of both talents and opportunity, to afford you more than a few miscellaneous hints upon this voluminous and interesting subject.

Whatever vacillation science may have suffered during several thousand years, or however differently it may have advanced with different nations, and at different times, it is not deducible from any authentic, historical record, that it had ever attained a higher elevation than at the time, and by the contributions of

the proverbially great Sir Francis Bacon, whose time commenced the era of renovated science—the resuscitation of a long smothered genius, that Bigotry had hitherto, for sixteen hundred years, securely immersed in the Stygian element, until its long unstruggling silence, attested to its dissolution. And Superstition, Bigotry and the Church, blessed the God of obstinate, ignorant Stability for so great and happy a deliverance. But their joy was turned to sorrowing, when they found that Genius had been only sleeping.

Whatever we may be called to do upon another occasion, we will confine our remarks, at present, to the question of comparative difference between the present state of natural, or physical science, and that of the time of Lord Bacon, of whom you have all heard much and often. He has been represented, and no doubt truly, as the wonder and disgrace of his age—the precocious philosopher, who in the sixteenth year of his childhood, ventured upon the invalidation of the fallacies of the Aristotlian philosophy, which for near two thousand years, had held unqualified dominion over the scientific opinions of mankind—a literary Hercules, who had the temerity to beard the peripatetic Lion in his den—the man of universal genius, and indefatigable industry, who wrote voluminously upon history, law, medicine, theology, physical and metaphysical philosophy, geology, mineralogy, agriculture, horticulture, witchcraft and magic.

And here we stop, to introduce, to your notice, a few specimens of this intellectual prodigy, of the olden time.

Speaking of the spontaneous elimination of salt, from sea-water, he says, vol. 1, p 240, of his works, in 10 vols., London, 1800, that he has little doubt, "that the very dashing of the water that cometh from the sea, is more proper to strike off the salt part, than when the water slideth of its own motion." This specimen affords indubitable evidence, that the great Lord Bacon was totally ignorant of the solvency and vaporability of water. He appears not to have known, that sea-water is but fresh-water holding in solution more or less common-salt, or muriate of soda; which is elimenated by the evaporation of the solvent, and aggregated, into more or less perfect cubic crystals. But this is knowledge, so familiar to all of you, that, were not the fact most veraciously recorded, you would seriously doubt, that a learned man of any period, could have been so grossly ignorant. Again, on the same page, speaking of the percolation of water and other liquids, through cloth, sand and wood, as being good strainers &c., he says: "The gum of trees, which we see to be commonly shining and clear, is but a fine passage, or straining of the juice of the tree, through the wood and bark; and in like manner, cornish diamonds, and rock rubies, which are yet more resplendent than gums, are the fine exudations of stone."

What backwoodsman—what aboriginal forester could have displayed a profounder ignorance, upon these subjects, than has this great scholar of the seventeenth century? Did he know, as children now do, that vegetable gums are the product of glandular

secretion in vegetables, no less than gall and urine are in animals; or that crystals cannot result from the percolation of sap or other liquid through an impermeable, inorganic rock? And these were the very gems of science, when Sir Francis Bacon was a prodigy of learning.

I am aware, that I ought not to waste this opportunity in quoting nonsense, even, from the highest authority; but I cannot resist the temptation, to present you with a few more specimens from this fountain of literary absurdity, which was, for a long time, esteemed the quintessence of abstract philosophy.

Upon the subject of temperature, my Lord Bacon says, p 270, "The producing of cold is very worthy the inquisition, both for the use, and disclosure of causes: For heat and cold are Nature's two hands, whereby she chiefly worketh; and heat we have, in readiness, in respect of the fire; but for cold, we must stay till it cometh, or seek it in deep caves, or upon high mountains: And when all is done, we cannot obtain it, in any great degree; for furnaces of fire are far hotter than a summer's sun; but vaults or hills are not much colder than a winter's frost." And of the means of producing cold, "the first is that which Nature presenteth us withal: viz. the expiring of cold out of the inward parts of the earth, in winter, when the sun hath no power to overcome it; the earth being, as hath been said by some, *primum frigidum*," or originally cold. "The second cause of cold is the contact of cold bodies; for cold is active and transitive, into bodies adjacent, as well as heat, which is

seed, in those things, that are touched with snow or cold water. The third cause is the primary nature of all tangible bodies; for it is well to be noted, that all things, whatsoever, tangible, are of themselves cold, except they have an accessory heat, by fire, life or motion: For even the spirit of wine, or chemical oils, which are so hot in operation, are to the first touch cold. The fourth cause is the density of the body; for all dense bodies are colder than most other bodies, as metals, stone, glass; and they are longer in heating than softer bodies. And it is certain, that earths dense, tangible hold all the nature of cold. The cause is, for that all matters tangible being cold, it must needs follow, that when the matter is most congregate, the cold is the greater. The fifth cause of cold, or rather of increase and vehemency of cold is a quick spirit, inclosed in a cold body; as will appear to any, that shall attentively consider of nature, in many instances. We see nitre, which hath a quick spirit, is cold, more cold to the tongue, than stone; so water is colder than oil, because it hath a *quicker* spirit—and snow is colder than water, because it hath *more* spirit within it. So we see, that salt put to ice, as in the producing of artificial ice, increaseth the activity of cold. So some insects which have spirit of life, as snakes and silkworms, are, to the touch, cold; so quicksilver, (or metallic mercury,) is the coldest of metals, because it is fullest of spirit. The sixth cause of cold is the chasing and driving away of spirits, such as have some degree of heat; for the banishing of the heat must needs leave any body cold.

This we see, in the operation of opium and stupefactives, upon the spirits of living creatures; and it were not amiss, to try opium, by laying it upon the top of a weather-glass, to see whether it will contract the air: But I doubt it will not succeed; for beside that the virtue of opium will hardly penetrate, through such a body as glass, I conceive that opium and the like, make the spirits fly rather by malignity, than by cold." Seventhly and lastly, he says, "the same effect must follow upon the exhaling, or drawing out of the warm spirits, that doth upon the flight of the spirits. There is an opinion, that the moon is magnetical of heat, as the sun is of cold and moisture: It were not amiss, therefore, to try it with warm waters; the one exposed to the beams of the moon; the other with some screen betwixt; and see whether the former will cool sooner."

It should be entirely unnecessary for me to point out, to you, the fallacies of this long quotation. It is altogether impossible, that any of you, for whom this discourse was prepared, shall misapprehend them. You cannot have evaded the conclusion, that this great author was childishly ignorant of the nature of heat, or caloric, and of the laws, by which its phenomena are governed. And are you not equally impressed with the discrepancy and imbecility of his misinterpretations?

You have not forgotten, that his fifth cause of cold is a "spirit, enclosed in a cold body," and that he instances the cold of nitre, or nitrate of potash, commonly called salt-petre, in the process of solution

upon the tongue, in confirmation. How clearly this example illustrates his ignorance of a principle, that chemistry has long since elucidated, viz., that the transformation of a solid, to a liquid, is invariably attended with the reduction of sensible caloric, which seems to have been absorbed and appropriated, as an indispensable constituent of the material, in its state of transformation; and in this state, wherein it is incapable of affecting the thermometer, or of being detected by the touch, it is denominated latent heat; of which, it is little less than discourtesy, that I should say, it must, necessarily, be derived from the surrounding bodies, and, therefore, in the case in question, from the tongue itself, thereby reducing the temperature, and consequently occasioning the sensation of cold. Nor can you have overlooked the surprising inconsistency of an immediately subsequent remark, in which he declares the sixth cause of cold to be "the chasing and driving away of spirits, such as have some degree of heat." What a farrago of nonsense have we here. A body cold, from the endowment of a cold spirit—rendered still colder by the abduction of a hot one, between which, there should have been represented an energetic contest for mastery; and this would have afforded a single cause of heat, altogether more plausible and efficient, than any he has propounded for the production of either heat or cold. He seems to have known nothing of the radiation, reflection, or conduction of heat; or his interpretations of cold (which, by the by, is nothing but the negation of heat,) would not have been char-

acterized by an irrecoverable decrepitude, with which, even, crutches are unavailable. Natural Philosophy was certainly in its infancy, when it recognized cold, as one of the active agencies of Nature!

A few moments further encroachment upon your patience will have ended my quotations, for the present.

Of the transmutation of bodies, or the changing of one substance into another, our philosopher says, p 275, "It is very probable, as hath been touched, that that which will turn water into ice, will, likewise, turn air, some degree nearer, into water: Therefore, try the experiment of the artificial turning water into ice, whereof we shall speak, in another place, with air in place of water, and the ice about it. And though it be a greater alteration, to turn air into water, than water into ice, yet there is this hope, that, by continuing the air longer time, the effect will follow."

Lord Bacon's geological notions are quite too absurdly curious to be entirely omitted in these quotations. He says, of the induration of bodies, "The examples, taking them, promiscuously, are many, as the generation of stones within the earth, which, at the first, are but rude earth, or clay; and so minerals, which come, no doubt, at first of juices concrete, which afterwards indurate; also the exudation of rock diamonds and crystal, which harden with time." "For indurations by cold, there be few trials of it; for we have no strong or intense cold here, on the surface of the earth, so near the beams of the sun and the heavens. The likeliest trial is by snow and

ice; for as snow and ice, especially being holpen, and their cold activated by nitre or salt, will turn water into ice, and that in a few hours; so it may be, it will turn wood or stiff clay into stone, in longer time." How very different is this solution from the modern geological one, viz., that earth is formed by the disgregation, or decay, of rocks, which detritus or sand being washed down from elevated positions, into the depressions or excavations of the earth's surface, are there subjected to the combined influence of pressure and volcanic heat, whereby they are again consolidated into primitive, solid rock, which, being subsequently elevated by the same volcanic power, becomes once more the subject of another revolution. Nor did the English philosopher, appear to have, even, dreamed, that the stones and pebbles, he refers to, were once aggregate portions of mountain rock, which had been wrought into their present character by the tireless operation of time and the elements.

Of making gold, by transmutation, this philosopher says: "The world hath been much abused by the opinion of making gold: The work itself I judge to be possible; but the means hitherto propounded to effect it are, in the practice, full of error and imposture; and, in the theory, full of unsound imaginations." In the mean time, by occasion of handling the axioms, touching maturation, we will direct a trial touching the maturing of metals, and thereby turning some of them into gold; for we conceive indeed, that a perfect good concoction, or digestion, or maturation of some metals, will produce gold." And here fol-

lows his recipe, for that invaluable purpose, viz. "Let there be a small furnace made of a temperate heat; let the heat be such, as may keep the metal perpetually molten, and no more; for that, above all, purporteth to the work. For the material, take silver, which is the metal that, in nature, symbolizeth most with gold; put in also with the silver, a tenth part of quicksilver, and a twelfth part of nitre, by weight; both these to quicken and open the body of the metal; and so let the work be continued, by the space of six months, at the least. I wish also that there be at some times, an injection of some oiled substance, such as they use in the recovering of gold, which, by vexing with separations, hath been made churlish; and this is to lay the parts more close and smooth, which is the main work." Alchimy, I need not tell you, in the utmost hight of its phrensy, never perpetrated a greater absurdity than this.

"Putrefaction," he says, "is the work of the spirits of bodies, which are ever unquiet, to get forth, and congregate with the air, and to enjoy the sunbeams." Of the many means, he enumerates, to induce and accelerate putrefaction, "the eighth is, by the releasing of the spirits, which, before, were close kept, by the solidness of their coverture, and thereby their appetite of issuing checked; as in the artificial rusts induced by strong waters (meaning the mineral acids) in iron, lead &c.; and, therefore, wetting hasteneth rust or putrefaction of any thing, because it softeneth the crust, for the spirits to come forth." Again, he says, of the conversion of oil into water,

"The intention of version of water into a more oily substance, is by digestion; for oil is almost nothing but water digested; and this digestion is principally by heat; or it may be caused by the mingling of bodies, already oily or digested; for they will somewhat communicate their nature with the rest." Again, upon the subject of vegetation, he says, "The ancients have affirmed, that there are some herbs, that grow out of stone; which may be, for that it is certain, that toads have been found in the middle of freestone." You do not mistake this illustration of the most preposterous fallacy, viz., that our philosopher seriously believed the toads referred to, to have been generated, nourished and matured within the enclosures where they were found. Upon the subject of atmospheric impurities, he says, "It was observed in the great plague of last year, that there were seen, in divers ditches, and low ground about London, many toads, that had tails two or three inches long, at the least; whereas toads, usually, have no tails at all; which argueth a great disposition to putrefaction, in the soil and air." Now this interpretation of a fact, that probably never existed, and seriously promulgated as an important item of natural philosophy, is too contemptible, even, for irony. It is entirely unworthy of a sneer.

As the last quotation, with which I will trouble you, at this time, I will present you one, with the following very curious caption, viz. "Of sweetness of odor from the rainbow." "It hath been observed by the ancients," says Lord Bacon, "that, where a

rainbow seemeth to hang over, or to touch, there breatheth forth a sweet smell. The cause is, for that this happeneth in certain matters, which have, in themselves some sweetness, which the gentle dew of the rainbow, doth draw forth, and the like do soft showers; for they also make the ground sweet: But none are so delicate, as the rainbow, where it falleth. It may be also that the water itself have some sweetness," &c. In the foregoing quotations, you are presented with adequate means to enable you to distinguish with satisfactory precision, the difference between the state of natural science, two hundred years ago, and at the present time.

You see, in what inexplicable mystery, the most ordinary phenomena were then enveloped; and how extremely fallacious, were the reasoning and interpretations of the most extraordinary genius of any age or country. But with these palpable—these preposterous fallacies, Sir Francis Bacon was not justly chargeable. He was undeniably an intellectual prodigy, who, having been born two hundred years later, would be, at this moment, the predominant star, in the world's literary firmament. No! it was not Bacon, but the times in which Bacon lived, that stultified an intellect, that, to-day, would successfully aspire to universal knowledge; a time when, for more than two thousand years, Superstition had inextricably fastened its clogs, upon the heels of Genius, and effectually tied up Reason, in leading strings.—A long period of proverbial literary darkness, which Christianity had arbitrarily enforced upon mankind. Do

not mistake me, as including, in my ideas of superstition, the most fastidious, moral virtue; but treat me, if you will, with the courtesy of recollecting my definition of it, as the subject of future criticism. I define superstition to be a religious veneration, for what cannot be examined by our senses, nor legitimately deduced by our reason: And if this definition is exceptionable, or its subject justifiable, they are in your possession, together with my premeditated promise of grateful acknowledgement for amendment, or refutation.

I am conscious of having hazarded much, with your patience, by the foregoing series of quotations and unavoidable, slightest possible comments, but, as I have already said, I could not forego the pleasure of introducing you to a few of the innumerable gems that sparkled upon the pages of former science. Nor will you, carelessly, mistake the character of the specimens, with which you have been presented. They are neither the stupid yawnings of rusticity, nor the evaporations of a brain, steeped in the bigotries of the time; but the profoundest cogitations of the profoundest and most learned of men. What, therefore, must have been the character of Bacon's time and cotemporaries, I leave to the fertility of your imaginations to interpret; langnage being altogether inadequate to its description.

From what has been adduced, you are doubtless fully convinced of the progressive nature of human science; and that the knowledge requisite to have made a wonderful philosopher of two centuries ago,

is scarcely sufficient to make a respectable clown of the present time. Nothing has been stationary within the modifying power of human intellect: And whatever has failed to participate of its plastic emendations, must have been excluded from its scrutiny, or have been too incorporeal for successful examination.

Could the spirits of the ancients be aroused, from their protracted slumber, and awaked, to a present and a retrospective consciousness, with what astonishment, would they look upon the world's metamorphosis, since they left its bustling theater?—With what magic influence, would the countless novelties, of physical science, which modern genius has dug out of the rubbish of former times, dance before their enchanted vision? And do you contemplate the future, as pronouncing the same humiliating sentence upon us, as we are justly pronouncing upon the past—that the proudest intellectual accomplishments of to-day, will, in a few fleeting years, be stigmatized as the fooleries of antiquity? I venture to charge you with having misapprehended the nature of the case, or the testimony, by which a decision should be sustained. The cases are not parallel, in the circumstances relevant to the question.

The earliest knowledge, amongst mankind, must have been that of mere animal wants, and the practical manipulation, subservient to their indulgence. Their enterprise must have been exclusively directed to the attainment of sustenance, and personal security; to which clothing and other comforts, and finally

luxuries, were, doubtless, successively added. Necessity and expediency must for a long time, with every primitive people, have formed the texts, upon which, their entire history was a practical commentary. Abstract science, therefore, must have been slow, in presenting, and still slower in substantiating, its claims, upon human consideration: And what is much more unlucky, still, is, that whatever reflection was appropriated, without the pale of daily necessities, was squandered upon the whims of an uncultivated imagination. Fancy supplied a substitute for facts, which prejudice, or imposture, lost no time in appropriating, to its favorite purposes: And hence, the worst of all literary predicaments followed, viz: That mankind were not merely ignorant, and therefore, justly supposed to be teachable, but erroneously taught, and so as to be incorrigibly certain of the infallibility of their own ignorance. You can have no difficulty in apprehending the advantages of mere negative knowledge, over fallacies, laboriously acquired. No! you need not be told, how much more irksome is the task of unteaching what has already been mistaught, than of teaching what has not been taught at all; and most, who have been either teachers or pupils, are doubtless ready to yield a cheerful corroboration of the fact.

That science, even in Christendom, was mostly founded upon hypothesis, for sixteen hundred years, you have ample testimony in the quotations, already presented you, from the works of Francis Bacon, to the truth of which every page of literary history

offers corroborative testimony: And that it was, during the same period, under the supervisorship of superstitionists, or mistaught individuals, we have only to refer to the biographies of such men as Roger Bacon, more commonly called Friar Bacon; Nicholas Copernicus, and the immortal Galileo Galilei. Nor does the former ever recur to my recollection, unaccompanied by sincere regret, that a little book purporting to contain many curious anecdotes of that philosophic paragon of the thirteenth century, and from which I derived an indelible satisfaction in my early boyhood, is not now extant; and in the possession of every youthful reader in my country.

Roger Bacon was a conscientious and indefatigable devotee of natural science—an enthusiastic aspirant after practical knowledge; in which hallowed enterprise he was but too successful, for the period at which he lived. His numerous and novel chemical experiments, amongst which was the discovery of the composition of gun-powder, were so wonderful to his ignorant and superstitious cotemporaries, that they contemplated him as an agent of the devil; and leagued with the adversary to spoil man's spiritual prospects: And for these holy aspirations after truth—this careful listening to Nature's interpretations of herself, he was denounced as a dangerous and insufferable heretic; forbade to teach his doctrines at the public university; and subsequently twice imprisoned; in the last instance, during ten years; forbade communication with his friends, and so poorly fed, as even to endanger his life—a martyr of both the inquisition of Nature, and of the Church.

Notwithstanding we have already expended a remark upon those mathematical prodigies, Copernicus and Galilei, our present, particular purpose may, nevertheless, excuse its repetition.

You have all, doubtless, both heard and read, much and often, of those great philosophers of the sixteenth century, whom Nature had endowed with an intellectual voracity, insatiable of her most prodigal and choicest revelations—swallowing, digesting and assimilating to their own minds, with the easiest facility, facts and principles which would stultify common intellects to contemplate.

The name of Copernicus is justly and inseperably associated with our present sublime system of mathematical astronomy, he being the extraordinary individual, with whom it substantially originated. And because he looked around him with a scrutiny unknown to his cotemporaries; and familiarized himself with principles of which the world had never dreamed; adopting the truths of Nature, regardless of their apparent discrepancy with revelation, he was relentlessly assailed with obloquy, persecution and outlawry, by the same Christian Church that claims to have been the successful patroness of all useful science for the entire period of eighteen hundred years.

Of Galilei, more should be said, in justice to his memory, and in condemnation of his cotemporaries, than would be compatible with the whole of the present opportunity; and yet, a word must suffice, to show the sort of patronage, the Church bestowed upon philosophy.

This was the man, whose genius, attracted by the individual footsteps, wherein Copernicus had sought out the material of a future edifice, approached the, yet, unquarried mountain, where a few unhewn blocks were scattered at its base; and here, its prodigious energies were successfully applied, in breaking up and fashioning the mountain mass, into the constituents of an exquisite, aggregate geometry.

These materials were erected, by his individual, superhuman strength, into a most magnificent temple of astronomical science, of which, only the cornice and dome remained, for the ingenuity of a Newton to supply. This man, unimpeached, even by his most inveterate adversaries, of any other delinquency, than a persevering scrutiny of Nature, for a revelation of her uncommunicated secrets, became the unfortunate object of a relentless persecution, which finally deigned to offer him personal safety, in exchange for his moral integrity. In this dilemma, into which his imputed heresies had involved him, he, unluckily, preferred hypocrisy to martyrdom; and, consonant with the requisition of a Romish tribunal, knelt before the altar of a persecuting superstition, and, with his hands upon the reputedly holy evangelists, declared, before God and a bigoted Inquisition, that what he had taught of the mobility of the earth, upon its axis, and in its solar orbit, was a false and damnable heresy, contrary to scripture, and the opinion of the Church. But as he arose from his posture of degrading, hypocritical humility, the resuscitated spirit of his native dignity awoke to an insuppressi-

ble indignation at the base duplicity, to which his moral cowardice had seduced him, and, in the act of retiring from that covert of bigoted misanthropy, exclaimed in the contemptuousness of a wounded spirit, "*E pur si mouve.*"—"And yet, it moves."

Such have been the usage and the fate of most of those occasional prodigies of genius, which Nature seems to have, especially, designed as the literary pioneers of mankind, to the literal fruition of a social millenium. But Prejudice has hitherto succeeded but too well, in thwarting the success of their benevolent mission!

The reasons, therefore, why I venture an augury, to ourselves, so much more favorable of the commendation of posterity, than we are willing, or bound, to bestow upon antiquity, are, that Truth has, at length disclosed so many of her fascinations, and so much of the sanativeness of her character, as, finally, to have become, with many individuals, a successful competitor, with fiction, for the affection and respect of humanity;—that the caustic acrimony, of a persecuting prejudice, has been very considerably diluted, by the blood and tears, which the votaries of truth have so often and so freely, shed, at its unhallowed shrine—that Facts, thoroughly scrutinized, in all their parts and bearings, are growing fashionable, as a substitute for the vague and unmeaning assumptions, upon which ancient theories were almost exclusively founded; and that a stupid veneration for the names and opinions of reputed great men which has, hitherto, lain, like an incubus upon the heaving chest of

slumbering Genius, is beginning to give place to a reasonable distrust of the claims of the one, and of the infallibility of the other. In fine, mankind are, more generally, waking up to the dignified consciousness, that they may, and ought to, think for themselves, upon all subjects, in which they have a common interest. And these circumstances are presented as a few of the many valid evidences, that our literary reputation should, and will, stand fairer with posterity, than that of antiquity does with us.

It is Truth, then, after which our race should exclusively and ardently aspire; nor should that ardor be dampened, by a single suspicion, that its attainment can possibly prove disastrous, or even adverse, to human welfare.

Error and Prejudice are the earliest characteristics of reflective humanity, and are only to be eradicated by the predominance of Truth and Reason, which, unfortunately, are often much too tardy in their mission, or too feeble in their administration, to establish a successful, salvatory dominion over the human character.

Thus you are enabled to contemplate the slowly progressive character of the human intellect, and to appreciate the obligation which science is under to Theology, for at least sixteen hundred years of the present era. And notwithstanding all the boastful dogmatism of the clergy, that Christianity has been the pioneer, and most liberal contributor, to natural science, for the whole period of its existence, History so flatly contradicts the assertion that we ought to be

excused for suspecting, its promulgators of gross ignorance, or culpable dishonesty. We know, that as late as 1633, the mathematical prodigy, Galileo, was sentenced to interminable imprisonment in the cells of a self-styled, holy inquisition, for adhering to his opinion that the earth revolved upon its axis, and also in its annual solar-orbit—facts as little disputed, at present, as that two and two make four. Yes! Christianity, in this nether world, has been another name for persecuting intolerance, and virulent, murderous contention. It has set its cloven hoof, upon the genius of Free-inquiry, with an inflexible determination to lacerate it, either to death or submission. It has inherited the bigotry of Judaism, and hoarded the acquisition with usurious care.

Did the Jewish law demand a pecuniary atonement for what it denominated a sin of ignorance? And if Michael Servetus sinned in dissenting from the dogmas of John Calvin, was it not purely the sin of ignorance; and a mere, though fatal misfortune, that he was unable to appreciate the necessity and certainty of three coeternal, coequal, successively-begotten, indivisible, individually-personal, triune, only-almighty God, who has, especially, fore-ordained whatever comes to pass; and that, therefore, man is predestinated to the character and events that shall pertain to him for, both, time and eternity; but that he shall, nevertheless, work out his own salvation, from a state of total depravity, to that of pure and persevering saintship; and all by the inevitable operation of the resistless grace of God? Yes; if Servetus sinned in

disbelieving this farrago of contradictory nonsense, this Calvinistic platform of rottenness, contagion, delirium and death, was it not a very great improvement of Judaism, that he should himself be burned in atonement for his sin, or otherwise his misfortune, if ignorant? But Servetus is a single name of an interminable catalogue, written with the faggot or the dagger, in the life-blood of conscientious men, sacrificed upon the altar of theological superstition. And although its tusks and claws are less murderous now, than formerly, its thirst for blood is unassuaged: It growls incessantly at the thought, that fratricide has grown unfashionable; nor fails to emulate its worst ferocity, in the insidiousness and multiplicity of its persecutions. It slanders morality, unmuzzled by its absurdities, and repudiates truth, unpledged to its fictitious purposes. It breathes, throughout this nominally free Republic, a desolating sirocco, to which opinion must surrender in submission, or in suffocation. It ought not to be so, especially at this late period of our history, when facilities for rational and useful learning, are so greatly multiplied, as almost to cheat mankind into an acquaintance with Nature's secrets, and a fascination of her charms. But Superstition is neither poor in expedients, nor slack in stratagem. Nor has she ever been at all compunctious of means, that success has more than justified. It has been, nevertheless, so difficult for Pity to attain its objects, that moral corruption, and even perjury itself, have been sanctified in its holy enterprise. Strange, that God should be driven to such a strait,

for means to propagate his own most sacred and momentous truth: A truth, if truth at all, no less momentous to Deity than man! Yes! Theology involves, as seriously, the beatitude of God, as the spiritual blessedness of his human creatures. The glory of God would seem to depend, for consummation, upon the salvation of mankind; and its accomplishment, therefore, upon the success of the salvatory institution, of which Jesus Christ is the reputed medium: So that wherever the Gospel proves unsuccessful, it affords an instance of derogation from His anticipated glory. How strange, we say again, that God should not have seasonably foreseen his own dilemma, from his creature's sins! and stranger still, to hope for extrication, by such futile instruments as assume to be of his adoption! Yet Theology consists of just such strangeness; and but for morality, to which it *speculatively* clings, as to a last and only hope, a single ray of truth would, long ago, have blighted its fictitious being, and expunged it from the catalogue of human fallacies.

LECTURE III.

ATHEISM AND THEISM DEFINED AND COMPARED.

The treatment of our present subject, nor that exclusively, is intended to be characterized by the strictest candor and courtesy, that its peculiar character will admit: And that facts, also, whenever they can be made available, shall be employed with entire impartiality, without distortion or misrepresentation: And if hypothesis shall be, sometimes, unavoidable, as upon most of our occasions it doubtless will, its admission shall be upon that principle only; and whenever adopted, shall not only have undergone my own careful scrutiny, but will be exposed to that of the Public, to be adjudged by its comparative plausibility.

I am well aware of the delicacy, not to say the danger, of my position with the orthodox community wherein I live; nor less so, of the disparity between my personal effeminacy, and the gigantic burthen, I have assumed to carry.

It is an adage of the olden time, that an ass loaded with gold can effect his entrance without difficulty,

into the strongest city. But then, how boisterous the hue and cry, Suspicion would excite, against the unwelcome visitor, were his load mistaken for infection of the plague. Yes, although it should be transported by Apis or a demigod. No matter whether it be fool or knave, that caters for our factitious pleasures; he is flattered and cherished, just so long as he cheerfully ministers to our vanity and licentiousness. And though he were the literal adversary of human weal, whilst he should carefully humor our foibles, and good-naturedly assent to our fallacies, he may safely insinuate himself into our very vitals, and deliberately gnaw himself out again, not merely with impunity, but with commendation. But let an angel, a demigod, or a prodigy of human wisdom, suggest a fallacy in our present notions, or an evil in our present habits, he is taunted with his folly, or condemned for his impudence. His name is heretic, and he is denounced as a blasphemer. Persecution lays her leaden hand upon his enterprise, and Superstition fattens upon the spoil. His life is verily a prologue to that spiritual perdition, to which Bigotry has triumphantly assigned him.

Atheism is a term derived from the Greek, and means, in its strict interpretation, without God. Its more general and later acceptation has been however, without a belief of God--and more recently, a direct denial of the existence of God. Admitting that mankind have almost always, and almost everywhere, believed in the existence of a God, and mostly in a multiplicity of them, it must strike the superficial ob-

server with a good deal of surprise, that there should be a single atheist in the world, unless he were either an idiot or a lunatic. And this, in its only proper acceptation, is most emphatically true: For whoever has sufficient intellect, to contemplate the simplest relations of cause and effect, cannot, in any rational interpretation of the epithet, be denominated an atheist: He will have acquired a belief of either theism or polytheism—of one God, or of many gods. The states of natural, and social, infancy, therefore, must be allowed to be most congenial with old fashioned atheism; unless it shall be satisfactorily ascertained, that the idea of God is instinctive, or connate; and, consequently, not acquired by reflection, or induction.

Since it is undeniable, that the idea of a God was early excited, and has almost universally prevailed among mankind, even to the present time, the first question to be interpreted is, whence and wherefore has such an idea occurred?

That the idea of God is not intuitive, instinctive, or possessed at birth, appears to be more than probable, from the consideration, that children appear never to have acquired it, except in the ordinary course of infantile education; and of which they demand the same particular explanation, as of any other subject of human inquiry. It is, therefore, a plausible hypothesis, that this idea was originally the product of reflection; and, when fairly analyzed, will be found to be identical with undefinable causality. And there seems to be no other possible method of solving the problem, whence and wherefore, the idea of a God,

whether supreme or subordinate; ultimate causality being identical with the former, and indefinite, secondary causality with the latter.

So entirely inadequate is human apprehension to trace the principle of causality to its ultimatum, that, upon many subjects, the profoundest philosophy is but a single step in advance of primitive barbarism. And the following is offered, in explication of our proposition.

The eye of a savage lights upon a watch, that casualty has dropped in his path: He views it with a suspicion, and approaches it with a cautiousness peculiar to his race: He ventures not to touch it; but, with a stick some yard in length, he moves it to and fro, until he perceives it to have neither teeth nor claws. He ventures then, though warily, to touch it with a finger—then with another; and finally to take it from the ground, as a most wonderful living specimen of creative power, whose origin, he most devoutly and reverently, refers to Manatou, or him who made the Indian. Here the philosopher smiles, contemptuously, in his cultivated egotism, at the childish simplicity of this native forester, who sees, or thinks he sees, a God, in human mechanism; and, in boastful confidence, exclaims, that he can trace this very watch to man's contrivance, and the manipulation of human fingers. But ask him how contrivance and those fingers came.—How humbled is his pride of learning, when he finds himself, so soon, obliged to ape the savage in his answer! A single step has found him kneeling to the Indian's Manatou, by the

name of God, in shuffling apology for his own imbecility. In this example, we discover not only the slight difference between the lowest barbarism and the highest cultivation; but that the idea of God is the same, with the whole human race, and identical with supposed ultimate causality. For we see that, because the savage was ignorant of the degree of human ingenuity, required for the construction of a watch, he referred it to the same power, or principle of causation, that produced himself—that is, one of which he was totally ignorant. And although the philosopher escapes the absurdity of expending his veneration upon a human mechanic, under the idea of God; what more does he know of the origin of man, than the savage, viz., that he must have been the product of some antecedent cause; which cause however seems to be altogether beyond the precinct of human scrutiny; and hence his veneration is at length, like that of the savage, expended upon unknown causality. It seems therefore plausible, at least, that the idea of God the creator is identical with that of ultimate causality, by whatever epithet it may have been distinguished; and is the only theological one, in which all mankind, both savage and civilized, ignorant and learned, have been found, unanimously, to agree. For it is undeniable, that the attributes appropriated to this God, by different persons and nations, have been as various and dissonant, as have been the states of human science, morals and opinion: And like every other department of intellectual enterprise, have been progressively modi-

fied, as society has emerged from the slough of primitive barbarism.

The idea of ultimate causality, or of an unknown cause, preceding the last known phenomenon, in any continuous course of reflection, upon natural relationship, can not be evaded; and being identical with that of creative omnipotence, must, consequently, be as universal as the ability to reflect: And since it was, a long time ago, clearly discovered that philosophy increases the distance between mediate and ultimate causality, by multiplying the particulars of the former, it is not surprising, that superstitionists shall have, for a series of past generations, almost unanimously, decried what they have denominated human learning, as tending to divert the attention from ultimate to mediate causation; or, in other words, diverting it from the creator to the creature, and thereby lessening the piety, believed to be indispensable to spiritual salvation.

Our apprehension of God is precisely the same as that of materiality: And certainly very few persons have been ever found, who have seriously denied the existence of the latter. Wherefore then, it may well be asked, has atheism obtained a name and a character among the fallacies of mankind?

The evidences in support of God, and of matter, when fairly examined, will be found of exactly the same import; and therefore of equal validity, in aid of both propositions. And whilst an indefinite diversity of natural phenomena, denominated creations, (more appropriately formations) demonstrates the

existence of the former, or of God; those physical qualities, that stimulate our senses, and modify our consciousness, as clearly testify to that of the latter.

It is evident, therefore, that we deduce a creator, from the creations, or existences, that surround us; and not from any innate or instinctive idea of such a character. We acquire the idea of God, also, in the same manner as we do that of Nature, viz., by an irresistible recognition of what are denominated its qualities or attributes: And although we know nothing of either, intrinsically, it would, notwithstanding, be no less absurd to deny their existence than our own.

Ultimate causality, alias God, therefore, as the primitive agent, in the production of Nature's phenomena, and Materiality as affording a substratum for their support, are equally incomprehensible and incontrovertible. But it is nevertheless equally true, that notwithstanding the conclusion is unavoidable, that both God and matter do exist, that existence, so far as human apprehension is concerned, is a mere logical deduction—an abstract metaphysical conclusion, arising exclusively from a recognition of those phenomena, which they are severally believed, but not known, to produce.

We acquire the ideas of figure, color, extension, resistance, motion and rest, which we denominate the properties and states of a supposed substratum, or predicate, of which the world is ready to declare, it positively knows its existence, as substance or matter; of which however, we have no other idea, than that

of the necessity of such an existence. Nor have we any appropriate language, with which to describe ultimate principles and atoms, which, as I have already said, are simple metaphysical deductions, which it is equally impossible we shall ever be able to understand or disbelieve.

That God, or Deity is synonymous with principle or attribute, inherent in, and coeternal with, matter, and identical with ultimate causality, seems to be most effectually sustained by the following reflections.

Were God an ultra, or super-mundane agent, who cogitated, with infinite perfection, and executed with infallible precision, the various principles and phenomena of Nature, it is clear, that the system of operations, once instituted, would inevitably proceed, during its destined period, with undeviating exactitude; nor need a God to watch or modify its progress. In this view of the subject, a God is undeniably nugatory. Not so whenever the name of God is used as synonymous with ultimate causality, which is a principle inherent in matter, and indispensable to the development and prosecution of its phenomena: For otherwise existence would be without an object, or the possibility of a change. Silence and stillness, or unvaried monotomy, would characterize a nugatory world; and God would be the only spectator of his own fatuity!

Every circumstance, or change in Nature, however magnificent or minute, depends upon ultimate causality for its existence. And however long or complicated shall be the chain of productive circumstan-

ces, it must have originated in, and been sustained by it. Therefore, while an extra-mundane God must be an idle spectator of the phenomena, his eternal decree has infallibly ordained, ultimate causality must enter into the constitution of every event; and can never be dispensed with, while consequences remain dependent upon antecedent causation. We might as well expect to see figure without substance; or meet resistance in a vacuum, as that change would occur independently of the agency of this ultimate principle, which theists denominate God. Hence, it would seem to be one of the clearest propositions in nature, that atheist is an unmeaning epithet, when applied to an inhabitant of Christendom, in the possession of common sense, and common cultivation; and that he, who thinks himself such, is altogether mistaken in his man, according to any interpretation which cultivated reason, of the present time, would deign to sanction. And yet, the world believes it has abundant, just occasion for the use of such an epithet. The question, therefore, is, Whence came this great, and almost universal error, amongst mankind? Doubtless, in the personification of causality, and in the fictitious and diverse characteristics, or attributes with which it has been clothed.

Judaism is particularly unfortunate, in the character of its deity, which it endows with the frailties of humanity, without its common sense: And in order to redeem my pledge of candor and impartiality, I feel myself obliged to present you with a few Biblical quotations in corroboration of the truth of my remark.

Did God, subsequently to his entire creation, declare, as in Gen. 1. 31, *That every thing he had made was very good;* and this in a culpable forgetfulness of the diabolical wiles of the serpent, which were, so soon, to pervert the ordinances of *omnipotence*, and write eternal damnation as the epilogue of human tragedy? For, if the history of the fall is true, the seduction and its consequences, were within the knowledge of omniscience, and therefore at the latches of the almighty.

And here, we find some striking lineaments of a most strange, and inconsistent Jewish God.

If those peculiar vegetables, denominated the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, were the products of a general creative principle, it appears somewhat strange, that they should not have been somewhere else produced, where soil and climate were no less genial. And if not thus generated, it seems that they, or at least the latter, must have been especially ordained for the ruinous catastrophe to which it so eminently contributed. And if God foreordained whatever comes to pass, he cannot escape the implication of having instituted the whole process of seduction, and that apparently for no more commendable an object, than to create a plausible but ficticious reason for the *painful* indulgence of almighty and eternal vindictiveness.

Did the eating the forbidden fruit, so miraculously improve the apprehension of our first parents, that they mutually blushed at the conscious immodesty of exposing their nakedness to each other; and was this

important trial of character omitted in their children's inheritance, whilst the penalty of disobedience was faithfully transmitted ? And is it fairly deducible, from this account, that but for the transgression, man must have forever remained in the imbecility and vulgar nudity of the beast, and hence acquired his superiority at the expense of eternal damnation ?

The story of the fall leaves no doubt, that primitive man was well endowed with animal propensities, without which he would indeed have been the personification of absurdity itself, and with them the unfortunate subject of the most fatal seduction.

Did God endow mankind with the propensities, because they were indispensable to his enterprise, and yet mistake their tendency to mischievous excess ? Or did he mean, that reason should be competent to their judicious exercise, and yet mistake the quantity required ; and therefore start, like one surprised at man's unrightousness ; and grieve, repent, and then malevolently condemn those creatures, for whom all else was made, and whence his godship was reflected, to the sateless burnings of an endless hell ?

Why does not this veracious and exact historic record inform us, how long this garden with its peculiar products preserved its being and its character, after the expulsion of the human pair ; and how long its dangerous enclosure was miraculously secured ? Suppose, for so we may, that those delinquents had partaken of the other fruit, while God had left it at their option, and, most strangely, unprohibited.—In what sad dilemma would Jehovah and mankind been

placed ? An immortal race of procreative, eating animals, threatening an accumulation, at some future period, that space could not accommodate, and for whom the earth, were it digestible, would fail to make a meal. What almighty power and cunning would have been, ere this, required, to make provision, of both room and sustenance, for such a race, my algebra will fail to calculate. And do you think the notion of a deathless, eating and prolific race of animals, so plausible as to have been adopted by omnisciency, or executed by omnipotence ? Or, of the tragedy of the fall, do you not think it passing strange, that what of undeveloped mischief, almighty prescience must have seen, omnipotence should have failed to obviate ; unless it shall have happened before the attribute of goodness shall have entered the triune partnership.

" And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering : But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had no respect." Now, this conduct of God, towards these two individuals, were it of a parent to his children, would be a subject of the severest reprehension. Wherefore, then, has Inspiration withheld from us the reasons for its justification ; and thus exposed mankind to the hazardous liability of distrusting the justice and impartiality of his maker, or the truth of inspiration ? Was Cain acquainted with the nature, and the crime, of fratricide ? And whence was such acquaintance formed ?—Or if otherwise, did a God of justice set the first example of retrospective legislation, the veriest shame to human tyrants ; of

visit with a merciless retribution, an act, not yet prohibited, nor criminally defined ?

Again we read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at his heart." And here I pledge myself, that you shall be pardoned the heresy, of asking whether the language of this quotation is most appropriate to God, or man, whatever penalty shall be awarded to the impiousness of my reply.

Should God's prescience, or foreknowledge be contemplated as a constituent of his own eternal, uncreated self ? Then, no fact pertaining to the history of man, or Nature, can have been new to such a character. And, if God saw from eternity, the grievous wickedness, his human creatures would voluntarily, and therefore inevitably, commit; nor believed His own omnipotence was able to restrain it; what a wretched life of penitence and grief, God's first eternity must have been ? For, with God the occurrence of the evil could not have aggravated the misery of its contemplation. Again, we ask, did God commit so strange an oversight, in arranging his affairs, as to endow his human creatures with power to thwart his own designs—to mar his bliss, and also damn themselves to endless misery—and meanwhile sit in endless, penitential, mournful contemplation of His own unfortunate improvidence, or imbecility ? Did God endow mankind with freedom of both will and

action; and, at the same time, know how perversely they would use it? Then, by the rules of human judgment, He was either impotent, or malicious: For man, apparently, were better not to be, than to be the subject of interminable perdition: And, therefore, God should have left him uncreated, or have been more provident of his welfare!—"And it *grieved* him (God,) at his *heart*." And is this expression applicable to a God, the omnipotent, and omnipervasive, principle of life, activity and transformation throughout the universe? or, as Judaism would have it, to a heartless, bigoted, partial, malicious, revengeful, relentless, exterminating impersonation of inconsistency itself. Or is it not, in truth, an expression of mere humanity, speaking ignorantly of itself, and referring to the heart, what belongs, exclusively to the head?

The deluge next presents itself, as a competent and unimpeachable witness to the inconsistency and imbecility of the Jewish God; to whom the following inquiries might have been presented with no bad grace: Or perhaps, with more propriety, to the writer of the fabulous nonsense.

> And did Omnisciency misapprehend,
> How ill its projects must thereafter end?
> Did God, at man's depravity awake,
> Too late to remedy the sad mistake,
> Of having made him, as he should not be—
> Not demi-God, but demi-devil he?
> And, therefore, form a project quite too odd,
> For any other, than a Jewish, God;
> Namely, the diluvian expedient,
> Without a plausible ingredient,
> With which to work a thorough reformation,
> Of the entire, degenerate creation—

Accepting Noah, as security,
For his successor's moral purity ;
Which seems a project altogether strange,
For any being, not yet quite deranged :
Nor could another hope, from such foul seed
To reproduce a renovated breed :
Didst thou compute the water as it stood ;
And cube the five-mile, superficial flood ?
Or cast, how much the mass of water weighed ?
Or how Miss Luna, in her orb was stayed ?
For sceptics are disposed to make a fuss,
As though her highness would have called on us—
And further say, nor, seemingly, in fun,
That Earth and Moon, must both, at once, have run,
A more than Gilpin-journey, to the Sun.
Didst thou see, clearly, where the stock was laid,
Of which this universal sea was made ?
Was it produced in vapor, from the earth,
Whilst Oceans were unequal to its birth ?
And were months used to bring the thing about ;
Seas must have risen, in form of water-spout !
And were it, thus far, marvelously done,
The work of miracles was but begun !
Since ten thousand years, at the common rate,
Were scanty, for it to evaporate ;
And time itself, would scarcely fit the soil,
To recompense the ploughman for his toil !
And were the flood no higher than the hill,
Upon whose top, the Ark, at length, stood still,
Four thousond years would scarcely dry the plain,
That trees and herbage might appear again.
Hence, to have dried it expeditiously,
Earth's heat must have been raised prodigiously—
So high indeed, that gods might be supplied,
With steaming chowder from the boiling tide ;
And, if the gods have hearts, it would not do,
That they should not have food and entrails too :
And were the water, as it may be said,
Especially, for this occasion made—
Say, whence the elements, of which 'twas wrought :
Or what the neighboring planet, whence 'twas brought ;
And then, how much almighty pow'r 'twould cost,
To right again, the system's balance lost!
Nor seems a work, with more vexation fraught,

> Except to make a universe of naught,
> Than to unmake that world of surplus rain,
> Which else must have involved the earth again:
> And were there gods, whom mankind could abuse,
> By any terms of slander, he could use—
> How base the sacrilege, to charge a plan
> So fatuous, on any thing but man!—

Or, if you would have it said in vulgar prose—Did God foresee, ere man was made, the strange preposterous character he would sustain—the mad devotion he would pay to passion and licentiousness—the deep corruption of a perverted mind, and the voluntary wickedness he would perpetrate; nor yet, revoke, nor modify, a plan so palpably defective? Or did he sleep so soundly, those, more than, sixteen hundred years, from the creation, to the flood, that the whole world's joint, boisterous blasphemy awaked him, only, when human wickedness was so incorrigible, that his own omnipotence was unable to reform it? And did he, therefore, as the only, or most feasible, expedient, decree the total extermination of the race? A project, you must all acknowledge would have been, especially, successful, had he punctiliously pursued it! But that it seems he did not do! And do you really believe an all-wise God could have been so improvident, as to expect to regenerate mankind, by making drunken Noah their progenitor? Was it like a God to fail in his mechanical design?—Or having failed, to destroy the labor of his hands, in childish petulance, in order to allay *his own heart's grief?* And is this to be received as a specimen of God's almighty triple infinitude? Was the project of the Flood, that involved a course of countless miracles, of which the

least was tantamount to original creation, verily, the suggestion of that unearthly Logos, that planned the system of both temporal and eternal things? And was it not the inevitable consequence of the sweeping agitations—the lacerating and disorganizing concussions—the suffocative pressure, and atmospheric exclusion, attendant upon the deluge, that vegetable, as well as animal, life must have been universally extinguished? And how were fish of countless species, saved from being overwhelmed, destroyed and deeply buried amidst the avalanches of upland rocks and trees and soil, the myriads of newborn cataracts must have driven, madly, oceanward? Do you think it probable, that fish and vegetables, which seem to have been uncared for, were really able to withstand a shock, that, without the aid of countless miracles, must inevitably have been the world's catastrophe? And would you not severely chide your wild imagination that should see, in retrospect, the diluvian patriarch, as he may have stood upon the then youthful brow of the long-since venerable and snow-capped Ararat, (where one seems to see that unique watercraft of primeval time, entombed beneath accumulating frosts of more than forty centuries) and in fearful sadness, look around him, upon the utter desolation of all of life and hope, that once had been; when lo! from where had lately swept the besom of destruction, and earth itself but just unwrapped of one continuous ocean, there shall have come forth, a feathered witness, to cheer the little household, with the gladsome tidings, that the lately ruined earth was

now itself again, and already green, with renovated herbage.

And this diluvian fallacy, together with the fabulous childish nonsense of the Fall, is seriously, and even coercively, urged upon the people of philosophic Christendom, in this forty-third year of the nineteenth century, as though it were the very genius of Inspiration, rehearsing the revelations of Almighty God. And with whom there rests a doubt of its divinity, there also rests the undivided curse of Spiritualism?

And yet, the question urges itself again, and again, upon human consideration, whether God did really *repent* and *gvieve* at his *heart*, like a disappointed infant, for what omniscience did not foresee, or omnipotence could not prevent?

> Or whether it was not Jehovah's plan,
> To stultify, or curse, the race of man?
> And, lest he should relent, assumed an oath,
> He kept so well, as to accomplish both!

And do you feel assured, that Noah's fabled ark was adequate to the object, for which it is said to have been constructed? And have you carefully examined all the circumstances involved therein, and found them clearly to corroborate the probability of that event? If so, you are much more fortunate, in these particulars, than your humble servant, who has, never yet, been fully able to reconcile, with his poor dividend of intellect, all the apparent difficulties presented in the case. And yet religious Faith descries innumerous things, as clearly, as shines the cloudless sun at noon-day, that impious Reason, with all her

artificial aids, as vainly looks for, as for courtesy from a bigot. Have you not already learned, from frequent, pulpit specimens, how entirely abortive are Reason's efforts in behalf of Faith? Nor is the case susceptible of amendment, whilst their vocations are less alike than cash and credit!

Allow me to present you with a single specimen of the imbecility of Reason, in its unnatural association with Faith; and in what hopeless predicament that subject must be, that relies upon no better arguments in its favor, than I have sometimes heard from the pulpit, upon the question of the deluge. Yes, I have heard a reverend advocate for the Bible's literality and truth, contest the doubts of Scepticism, with zeal enough to frighten Reason from the sanctuary; and, in conclusion of a labored argument of sounds and attitudes, in proof of written revelation, declare, emphatically, "that Noah's ark had room enough for all it was intended to preserve; *at least for all with which mankind were then acquainted.*" Alas! that God should be obliged to leave his work to be accomplished by such infirmity! And do you think that Reason would ever risk herself again with such an incompetent interpreter? Or insanely blast her honor, to aid the credit of a fiction? A sacrifice, in either case, too wanton to justify a serious suspicion.

Considering the peculiar embarrassments of time and circumstances, it would really seem to have been rather an extraordinary undertaking, for a single individual, or even a single family, to construct, in the very teeth of a jeering and opposing Incredulity, that

mammoth world-preservative, within the time allotted by Biblical Chronologists.

Ere log-canoes, or bulrush substitutes, were invented, a Nation's genius, and a Nation's wealth would have been scarcely adequate to such an enterprise. And yet I will not pronounce the thing impossible; but, rather than risk my teeth with so unchewable a mouthful, will put my capacious gullet into requisition, and swallow it at once. But there are other particulars, which are not, so conveniently, to be disposed of; being, not only, too tough to chaw, but, palpably, too gross to swallow. But admitting Noah to have been either the butt of ridicule for his apparent simplicity, or an object of pity, for his supposed lunacy, throwing him entirely upon his individual resources, for the accomplishment of his magnificent undertaking; and that he, nevertheless, succeeded, and that, too, within the apparently inadequate period of the year two thousand three hundred and forty-nine before Christ; and that it was also fully adequate to its design; however heavy their demand upon our credulity, are altogether the most plausible particulars of this preposterous narrative.

Do you think it within the range of the strangest probability, that, in the short period of seven days, allowed to Noah for freighting his vessel, seventy thousand living creatures were actually and simultaneously collected from their peculiar and indefinitely diversified locations and climates—from every point of compass, and every habitable portion of the earth's geographical surface, together with their appropriate

nourishment, which could not have been less than ten times their own bulk, or even their own weight; amounting, in the aggregate to an equivalent of seven hundred and seventy thousand such animals, ten of which only, viz., the mastadon, elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus and elk, would have required, at least, one hundred and ninety tons of vegetable food; a little less than an ordinary ship load, and, in the common, farming way of packing, would have filled five common barns: And in this way of proceeding, we shall soon have appropriated the whole of Noah's mammoth vessel.

Have you ever thought, how very odd it must have seemed, to see so many thousands of dissimilar animals, spontaneously emigrating from country and kindred; and contrary to every impulse of instinct and habit, compassing, by one universal miracle, trackless, and almost immeasurable distances of desert land and ocean, to form the least congenial congregation, insanity could have dreamed of; and also each, since any other mode seems quite impossible, voluntarily transporting ten times its weight of that peculiar nourishment, its adopted country would not afford, nor yet an answerable substitute? And since it seems to be a law, amongst the carniverous tribes, that each inferior species, successively, shall become the sustenance of its superior, how odd, to see each several, single pair or septenary, group, (for birds, however carniverous and foul were no less cared for, than delicious poultry, and therefore saved in septenary pairs,) how odd, I say, to see them each, and all,

attended by their appropriate, nutrient herds, and flocks, and swarms of living creatures, most unnaturally and marvelously anxious to be eaten!

Omitting to notice any of the thousand, specific peculiarities, by which animal existence must have been distinguished, in the different climates and localities of Asia and Africa; and the apparent inconveniences attending their sudden congregation at a single point in ancient Armenia, there are, still, innumerable circumstances, with which my incredulity is querulously at issue; of which however, an instance or two must suffice our present purpose.

Among the many kinds of animals peculiar to South America, which must have been included in the diluvian, salvatory project, however difficultly accomplished, there are four species of Ant-eaters: Hence we may reasonably contemplate eight of them, accompanied by countless millions of those diminutive insects, for whose destruction P. M. Roget & Co. would declare these animals were intentionally and especially created; and these also attended by their multiplied myriads of *aphides* or vine-fretters, no less indispensable to their own necessities: For it would be preposterous to pretend that Noah, in addition to all his other perplexities, should have been obliged to hunt up ant's nests enough to provision these eight gormandizers, for the period of a full year after their arrival in Armenia! And, in order to *strengthen* the probability of the principal event, we may also imagine those insectiverous *myrmecophaga*, with their incalculably numerous attendant insects, most provi-

dently pioneered, in their seven days excursion of more than six thousand miles, by their *enterprising*, *sprightly* compatriot, the Sloth; of which it is said, that he is so deliberate in his progressive expeditions, as, having become fattened upon one forest tree, to be reduced to the last state of emaciation, while traveling to the next one, though but a few yards distant. Nor would the Dodo, of the Isle of France, the literal impersonation of deformity and inactivity, be an unapt commissary in such an anomulous enterprise! In what condition do you think the Boa, Crocadile, Sloth, Ape, Lion, Elephant and Ostrich, from the hottest climates, would have been found, at the end of this strange catastrophe, and at a point of elevation marked by perpetual frost? And do you deem it a plausible suggestion, that the White-bear would spontaneously prosecute a journey, from Greenland, to the interior of Asia, when he pants in the sunshine of his own polar zero; thus, not only, to be broiled in the plains of the Frat or the Kur, but to starve for lack of fresh fish and seals, which the deluge must have rendered it particularly difficult to obtain. The Argos-pheasant, also, must have been somewhat difficultly sustained, upon so long a voyage, unless its character has been misrepresented: For it is said of it, that it cannot be kept alive beyond a single month, in a state of bondage.

Suppose, however, all these, and a thousand other apparently impossible events to have really occurred; and the ark, not only, to have been built, but fully freighted, consonantly with its reputed purpose; and

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all that heterogeneous congregation quietly nibbling its several rations, in strange, promiscuous harmony—it still remains a problem of most unfeasible solution, how Noah, with his undisciplined and scanty help, could have safely navigated such an unwieldly enormity, in such a limitless, dark and boisterous ocean, without rudder, anchor, star or compass, nor yet, have failed to end his anomalous and erratic voyage, within the limits of his own Armenia. But may be, you are ready to retort, that God was Noah's pilot; and hence the safety of the ship, and prosperity of the issue! Then, in my opinion, God has been much more ingenious and successful in his nautical, than spiritual, affairs!—a much better mariner, than metaphysician or legislator; or both Jews and Christians have slanderously misrepresented Him! And again; though theological credulity shall be able to reconcile these preposterous circumstances, to its peculiar standard of consistency, it would seem that, were it not early and constantly disciplined in swallowing absurdities by the volume, it would find itself, not a little, perplexed with the state of affairs, inevitably consequent upon the deluge. It must have required much more than a mimic miracle, to produce a sudden crop of luxuriant verdure from out the mud and rock, the flood, so lately, had abandoned—a state, in which the earth could have been, scarcely, more prolific, than when it first emerged from a primeval chaos! And Theology, as we have seen, at length admits an epoch, of at least a thousand years, to have been expended upon the earth's first, verdant mantle, ere insects,

beasts and birds, the product of such an other epoch, were sent to nestle in its folds: Nor terminates the difficulty here!—For, admitting vegetable luxuriance to have, miraculously, succeeded the deluge, there yet remains the perplexing consideration, that a great proportion of Noah's omnigenous congregation was carniverous; and therefore, in the absence of another, no less miraculous creation, than that wherein the life of animals originated, these imprisoned, fleshly feeders must have been turned adrift, with the improvident and evil chance of eating one another—ending thus the catastrophe of the fable! And yet, the most surprising miracle of all is unrecounted; viz., that God should not have saved himself so unnatural and perplexing an administration of his own affairs, as, by a single miracle, to have aided our first progenitors, in a successful resistance of the devil; nor left them to become, by *disobedience*, so exactly like *himself*—and that at such an awful *hazard!*

I have thus presented you with an inconsiderable fraction of the evidence of inconsistency in the character of the Jewish God, as contained in his own revelation of himself. And if more is required, in order to complete any undecided conviction, a general reference may be made to the entire pentateuch, wherein the greatest follies and the blackest crimes are abetted and enjoined by this personification of the genius of superstition. And should men be stigmatized as atheists, and thrust without the pale of civil privilege, and protection, because their faith but darkly sees the worth of such a character; or their reason has broke

loose from traditionary leading-strings, and claimed its right of supervisorship ? The Indian's Manatau, without a doubt, deserves as much respect as this of Israel, or as any other extra-mundane fiction called a God, or by any other name, that men have chosen for their ignorance of causation !

Of an extra-mundane God, of whom it has been already said, that he would be inevitably as useless as a marble statue, in superintending the phenomena of the world, the following additional remark may not be unacceptable, as an illustration.

Let me refer you to that primitive, ideal state of things, when universal chaos reigned.—When God's omniscience planned a Universe unlimited; and his omnipotency spoke it into being.—When his single contemplation must have viewed infinity of circumstance and space, throughout an interminably revolving series, as though all changes, to be thereafter wrought, were but as unity, in the present tense.—Nor could that contemplation be repeated, since nothing new could possibly occur, to call it into action. One effort also of omnipotence, must have been the alpha and omega of God's determination, since that must have set the world's machinery effectually and infallibly in motion ; and wherein it must resistlessly continue as long as he shall have decreed it ! Thus we see that such a God's creation must have commenced and ended simultaneously, and not progressed by regular succession of time and circumstance ; And therefore, since he passed his first decree, he must have sat an idle and a passive looker on of all

the world's innumerable and inevitable phenomena : Nor would his presence be one whit less nugatory, than that of him, who shall have made a clock, to measure out, with absolute precision, each moment of a hundred years, and that but with a single winding, and then should sit and count the motions of its pendulum.

Would not the hands of such machine revolve as well, were he who wrought them dead, as though he lived to watch the progress of their uniform and perfect revolutions ?—And if thus—wherefore should doubt, or disbelief, of such a character be bandied, except from fool to fool, as sinfulness or reproach ? What but Bigotry, or Lunacy would deem it blasphemous to say, that such a God, whether of Gentile, Jew, or Christian, is not more useful than a man of straw ; nor more deserving of human veneration ?

But then you say, perhaps, that intelligence must have been employed, in arranging the materials of this complicated physical Universe, and the phenomena, they specifically and relatively present. Intelligence, therefore, becomes the subject of present and particular inquiry ; and is, without a doubt, as far as ordinary humanity is able to distinguish, exclusively, an atribute of an organized, living sentient being, in possession of a brain and nervous system, and consists in a more or less clear perception of the phenomena of Nature, and the several relations existing among them : And hence the brain, and not the heart, should be contemplated, as the exclusive instrument of mind, thought or soul ; and this, wheth-

er consciousness result from organic functionality, or from a more or less successful effort of the soul to display itself, through the vulgar medium of physical organism. And, whatever the mode of operation, it is already the settled opinion of all educated persons, that the better developed, the more healthy, and the better disciplined and sustained, is this cranial or psychological machinery, the clearer, and more elevated, is the intellectual product or functional intelligence, it displays.

In these respects, thought and locomotion possess a parallel character, both being alike embarrassed by defective, or unhealthy, organism, or deficient, or excessive exercise.

The idea of thought existing abstractly from a brain, would be no less preposterous, than that of animal motion, unconnected with muscular developement. A brainless philosopher, and an agile skeleton would be equally strange phenomena. In fine, it appears to me quite impossible to conceive of mind, or soul, but as an attribute or function of organized, living, animal matter. And hence it follows, that deity, in order to posses the attribute of intelligence, should be also in possession of a brain, or some other appropriate, physical organ, through which intelligence, mind, or soul, may be displayed, or by which it may be generated. It appears, therefore, incontrovertible, that the intelligence of God must be animal intelligence, or that, of which mankind can have no manner of conception: And hence the theist cannot escape the vexatious dilemma, that his God is clothed

with human attributes, or with none at all, as far as he can apprehend. And do you think the former kind, which is scarcely adequate, at best, to the ordinary exigences of temporal humanity, well befitting the creator and director of a world's affairs? Nor can the difficulty be at all obviated, by the vulgar, senseless expedient, of annexing the term, infinite, to this, or any other, imputed attribute of God. For this adjective, like the subject, it is so often used to qualify, however convenient, or indespensable, use may have rendered it, means neither more nor less, than an indefinite extension of its substantive, beyond the limits of human apprehension: And in every case in which it is used, it is exactly synonymous with an acknowledgement of total ignorance of what it is intended to express. Therefore, whoever speaks of wisdom, power and goodness, as attributes of God, whether qualified by the nugatory adjective, infinite, or not, is manufacturing a deity of the attributes of mere humanity. And here you will allow me to ask again, Who else but fool or lunatic would kneel in pious veneration, to so uncomely and so strange a vagary?

The difficulty upon this question seems to depend upon the fallacy of confounding an attribute of mere humanity, and one in no inconsiderable degree common to men and beasts, denominated intelligence, with the adaptiveness or consistency of Nature, of which this same human intelligence is a constituent; man himself being a part of her physical system, and employed in the performance of her functions.

And were I indulged a moment for recapitulation,

I would express my own belief of God and his intelligence, in the language of the following theorems.

First. That the original idea of God is universally and unexceptionably the same, with all mankind, who are endowed with the ordinary powers and opportunities of reflection; and that it is identical with that of inherent, primitive, or ultimate causality, and spontaneously engendered in the mind of every inquirer after the causes of things. And thus, is the only plausible notion of atheism completely invalidated—no man being obnoxious to the epithet, who is able to contemplate the existence of an unknown cause: Upon which point, the savage and the sage are nearly equal competitors; both infallibly attaining their goal, but by different steps, and unequal despatch.

Second. That natural Theology affords no other evidence, or knowledge of Deity, than that of mere abstract existence, obtained by induction, whilst investigating the relation of cause and effect. And that nothing more can ever be known upon the subject, except by the assistance of supernatural revelation.

Third. That intelligence, as applied to God, is altogether void of meaning, or palpably slanderous of his imputed omnisciency; and cannot be theologically employed without the basest irreverence, or, the deepest stupidity. It would, nevertheless, be strikingly absurd, to utter an explicit denial of the intelligence of God, or causality, which it is not man's province to determine; but it is his right to insist upon the truth of the proposition, that human apprehen-

sion cannot, in any conceivable manner, apply itself to the subject of infinite wisdom, admitting such wisdom to exist. Nor is it possible for mankind to acquire any definite idea of the existence of any other intelligence, affection, or propensity, than that which is displayed by living animals. Thus, are men stigmatized, as infidels and atheists, because they see and own their ignorance of all beyond the pale of time and things, and humbly yield, to God or Nature, the sole direction of superhuman incidents—Meanwhile, the human egotist, who assumes to be familiar with the privacies of God, and with the undeveloped circumstances of, perhaps, a ficticious future state of being; and who, both night and morning, impudently asks his God, to shape His providence, to his own immediate, particular occasions; or, at least reminds Him of the duty of looking carefully to His own affairs, is eulogized as a model of humanity; and as a very pink of piety and wisdom. Nor are vanity and impudence the only faults, that reason charges upon such pharisaic holiness. She hears them confidently reiterate the purest Gospel-precepts, as though they were themselves the Logos, whence they came; and, meanwhile, hourly contradict them by their base examples.—She also hears their daily, formal prayers, in which they ask their God to be a benefactor to the poor—to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; nor ever dream that God has made them stewards of a bounty, He intended should be thus appropriated: And hence she tells her votaries, that there is something wrong, or rotten, in the system of theology.

And for this, she and they are slandered and condemned as miscreants, and fearful agents of the adversary, in the diabolical project of both temporal and eternal ruin: Nor has she ever ventured a comment upon its absurdities, even those, which itself has subsequently discarded, in shame for their very ugliness, but that superstition has, forthwith, persecuted her from Dan to Beersheba and back again; nor relaxed in her severitees, until by tortures, and oaths of extermination, the exhausted and disheartened heritic has been made to utter a heartless recantation.

Nor has the cry of heresy, blasphemy, infidelity and atheism, ever failed to be raised against the votaries of Reason, who have dared to inculcate her suggestions of the deformities of Popery, and even of Judaism itself; nor have its echoes ceased, wherever Superstition has set its cloven hoof, since Seth and Enos, lucklessly, mistook causation for a God: But even here, in this focus of discordant spiritualism, or, as discourtesy might say, this menagere of biped animals, where precept and example are hot at loggerheads, and vociferously bandying the lie, in each other's teeth, Superstition is already getting hoarse with brawling of its danger and its infallibility.

Thus you see I have thrown the gauntlet to Judaism, and the superstitions of Christianity; nor intend ever to resume it, whilst I retain the power to wield either tongue or pen, in what I deem a most holy, contest—a contest of Reason and Truth and Amity, against Lunacy, Error and murderous Dissension.

But lest I should be mistaken for a disorganizer—

a civil and moral nuisance—an abettor of crime, and an advocate of licentiousness, I must beg your attention to the following avowal.

I hold to equal, and mutual rights, privileges, and responsibilities, among all persons, of all countries, and of all colors; and that it is the especial duty of each individual in every community, to act conscientiously, or in accordance with the suggestions of reason, uninfluenced by personal considerations, by prejudice or partiality—or by the fear of consequences, to persons or characters; and, meanwhile, aim to make the greatest possible contributions to the common stock of human happiness.

I hold that the moral precepts of the New Testament should be adopted, as the standard of rectitude among mankind, until an unquestionably better system shall have been obtained. And that the Gospel can never become seriously objectionable, until its precepts shall have been surpassed by the excellence of human conduct; of which disparagement, it appears in no immediate danger.

I hold, that Legislation should seek to elevate the character and promote the welfare of its subjects, with the least possible infringement of the principle of reciprocity; being itself obedient to those institutions of Nature, that regard the production, preservation, usefulness and happiness of the human race.

And were there a power, that I could successfully invoke, I would become a wrestling Jacob, until I were blessed with the happy consciousness, of having fully exemplified the purity of the Gospel, in my own daily practices.

LECTURE IV.

INFIDELITY AND RELIGIOUS FAITH CRITICALLY EXAMINED, AND COMPARED.

Infidelity, or unbelief, in its religious acceptation, is a disbelief of the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures, or of the superhuman origin of Christianity; whilst the opposite should, of course, be received as the definition of religious faith.

Since Nature is entirely barren of testimony in favor of theology, and further than the inductive conviction, she enforces, of the existence of an ultimate cause, which we have considered, heretofore, as identical with God, the creator, mankind have found it convenient to introduce, upon this question, the testimony of a reputed divine revelation. And, upon this, I believe the utmost reliance is almost universally placed. If, therefore, it should fail to sustain itself, under the severest scrutiny, Theology will be inevitably exposed in its naked decrepitude; and abhorred for its digusting deformities: But, on the other hand, if it is marked with the consistency and infallibility of the laws of Nature, it will grow brighter by

collision, and more and more conspicuous by the tests to which it is submitted. And were I a disciple of revealed religion, I would solicit, and even provoke, discussion upon the question of supernatural revelation, until the infidel shall have relinquished the last hook, upon which to hang even the shadow of an objection; glorying, meanwhile, in my increasing confidence of the truth, as my adversary shall have retreated from the field of contest.

When have men fallen to loggerheads, about the permanency of the laws of Nature? Or whether they were in danger of being obstructed or perverted by the fallacy of human opinion? Have they not proceeded with the same regularity and results, whatever opinion mankind have maintained of them? And, were Theology of a similar character, would it surrender its dominion over the opinions of men, sooner than gravitation over his physical corporality?

Revelation is, nevertheless, believed to be, in technical phrase, a *noli me tangere*, or touch me not—a *sanctum sanctorum*, or holy of holies, wherein the profanity of human reason is, peremptorily, forbidden to enter, lest it should corrupt the savor of holiness, or be itself extinguished, for its sacrilegious temerity. But then again, the laws of Nature, which Theology admits to be the institutions of God, are, in no wise, impaired by the closest examination; and wherefore revelation should be more endangered, from a similar scrutiny, is a question of no easy solution, unless it is itself a fiction.

The truth of revelation, or the supernatural char-

acter of the Scriptures, therefore, offers itself for examination: An enterprise so full of danger, if not of difficulty, that less than the temerity of martyrdom would cower at the enunciation of its terrible threatenings. It is deemed an unhallowed encroachment upon the sanctuary of the holy mountain, which Theology has fenced about with a mysterious sanctity that pales the face of the most dauntless intruder. A critical inquiry into the divinity of revelation is, at any time, a desperate undertaking, and affords a practical illustration of the language of the author of Christianity, wherein he exclaims, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother," &c.—a declaration that every page of Christian history has fully verified. And thus, innovation upon established prejudices has always done! But if, as the present opinion is, God permits mankind to examine, and speculate upon his works—wherefore should his word be excluded from the same ordeal? Would God have promulgated a sentiment or a principle, for the theological, moral or political direction of mankind, less infallible, in truth and effect, than are the laws that govern the inorganic world? Whence, then, the cowardly dread that the word of God is in danger of being subverted? But perhaps the disciple of Christianity deprecates the temporary evils of Infidelity upon the weak and credulous, during a contest in which the latter shall be finally overcome?

This is, nevertheless, an unjustifiable fear; since the path to Christian conversion must be constantly, if not fatally, obstructed, until every stumbling-block to scepticism shall have been effectually removed. Hence the necessity of collision, until Theological, shall vie with mathematical, truth, in the clearness of its demonstrations—when man shall be again admitted to a personal interview with his maker; nor be cheated of the certainty of truth, of all the most momentous, through the fallacious medium of human interpretation. And here, I must solicit your patience, while I speak a few words, in explanation of my own particular predicament.

Notwithstanding the notoriety of my irreligion, which I have never shrunk from declaring, whenever solicited, with a frankness that ought to have vouched, at least, for my sincerity, I have succeeded in acquiring the friendship and patronage of a great number of individuals, and mostly too of Christian denominations, whose acquaintance any man might have been proud to share; but, I may be allowed to say, upon this particular occasion, that I have, nevertheless, been, more than any other individual of my acquaintance, the object of an unremitted, relentless and bigoted persecution, for more than thirty years; and after all, am, at this moment, enjoying the compensatory reflection, that I have contemptuously rejected hundreds of solicitations to place myself, even in the foremost ranks of Christian communities; and that I have also resisted as many temptations to secure my

temporal prosperity, at the sacrifice of both my reason and conscience.

But then the oddest point in this long history of bloodless persecution is, that after thirty years of frank avowal of my scepticism, the tug of war, with murderous Bigotry, shall have but now arrived. And wherefore all my Christian friends should deem me closer leagued with Satan now, than at any former day of thirty years, is beyond my feeble power of divination. My principles were drawn, like theirs, from Gospel infallibility, wherein my spirit has been daily schooled, from childhood onward: And though its warfare with the flesh has proved its discipline defective, nor made my case, in this respect, at all peculiar; is it reasonable to fear, that wear and tear have made me more licentious?

But when my friends, in tearful sorrow for my waywardness, shall threaten to withdraw their friendship and their patronage, in conformity with the plain injunctions of a Christian conscience, and prescribed allegiance to the infinite source of merciful forgiveness; I have but one reply to such denounement, which is: However dearly I esteem the affection of my friends, and that can scarcely be suspected, in one, who honestly declares his willingness to yield his life in sacrifice for the welfare of his foes, I cannot hesitate, in the arbitrary and unnatural dilemma, wherein my friends, or liberty, must be relinquished. You know 'tis base, contemptibly base, that man should enter into voluntary slavery to his fellow man; but that 'tis baser still, except by moral suasion, to at-

tempt to modify a single thought: But then, all other baseness may, comparatively, assume the name of virtue, when contrasted with that low sycophancy, that would purchase favor with its self respect—a baseness inexpressible by any epithets afforded by our language. And then suppose that penury, with its hungry importunity and rags, should drive me to a base relinquishment of liberty and self respect, for patronage and friendship. What magnanimity in friendship thus developed, thus obtained and thus directed? Moral putrefaction would be a savor of righteousness in comparison! But enough of this uncomely egotism, which nothing but apparent necessity would have elicited. The question of supernaturalism is much more worthy of my labor, and your attention.

The scriptures purport to be a divine revelation from God to man; and in this assumption, the population of Christendom, almost unanimonsly concur. And in order to frighten incredulity, and even timidity into acquiescence, Imposture has set its seal thereon, engraven with a denunciation of the unbeliever; and damnation to him that doubts. But to this particular point, whatever the imputed heresy, the American citizen, white or black, male or female, should not hesitate to speak with a frankness, emphasis and boldness, persuasive of his sincerity, and his proud consciousnes of personal liberty. And here, in the unbending spirit of reciprocal and impartial freedom, I venture to enunciate my irrevocable curse upon cowardice, and blush to think, how many Jonahs

are my brethren. Yes, to be frightened into a relinquishment of one's opinion, by threat, purporting to be either from God or man, is a base servility, to which an upright, manly consciousness can never bend: Nor is there more than seeming heresy in this remark: For it is a truth, no one can hope to controvert, that a God *cannot*, and that man *should not*, be unreasonable.

The disciples of Christianity are, or ought to be, fully conscious, that both the supernatural and literal characters of the scriptures have been subjects of censorious controversy for many hundred years: For that an occasional individual, has broke loose from the restraints of traditionary superstition, and with a temerity that defied persecution, promulgated his heresies in the teeth of a retaliatory, malignant and fashionable theology. Nor does the question appear, at present, to be any nearer settled, than at any former period of the protracted contest. Christians ought not, therefore, arbitrarily, to impose upon an opponent, a series of essays, as indisputable authority, whose character and import have been a subject of interminable, malevolent dissention, even among themselves.

Were the truth of biblical divinity susceptible of demonstration, or even of plausible support, by extrinsic circumstances, or intrinsic consistency, it would, assuredly, have been, long since, shorn of its countless horns, upon which Scepticism has, so long and securely, hung its myriads of objections. But to the great annoyance of its disciples, those horns have

grown more numerous and conspicuous, as science has dispersed the darkness in which they were generated.

Whenever testimony is demanded of the truth of divine revelation, the inquirer having been firstly presented with a motley preface of hems and haws, of grins and grimaces, of groans and grumblings at the absurdity and even sinfulness of such a query, is finally referred to what are denominated prophecy and miracles for a demonstration of its validity; as though the most unlikely, if not impossible, things in nature, were to be credited as self-evident truths. These are propositions which Nature abhors and Philosophy detests—which cultivated reason indignantly spurns; and to which, nothing but the darkest superstition, or the wildest mysticism can be made to assent. And yet in these palpable fallacies, slanders of Nature, and mockeries of her consistency, there is something that may be seriously, but mournfully, contemplated. One truth, at least, is included in these propositions, which must not only be admitted, but is doubtless deserving an explanation; viz., the almost universal conviction of their validity.

It is not to be doubted, that the probability of very many future, or anticipated, events, may have been very clearly apprehended by many of the Jewish, Pagan and Christian moralists and politicians, and accordingly promulgated, in the language of positive assurance; by which ignorant credulity may have been successfully imposed upon, and a positive knowledge of future events very naturally supposed

to exist, in the character of an undefinable, supernatural state, or kind, of human consciousness.

Those nominal prophecies, of whatever date, place or character, were, doubtless, more or less rational inductions from known moral or political circumstances, and generally promulgated, especially among the Hebrews, in the imaginative spirit and style of antique poetry: But however legitimately and successfully they may have been deduced from substantial premises, they must, nevertheless, have been, and remained, mere matters of faith, and not of fact, until their actual transpiration shall have given them a palpable and indisputable existance: For the most confident and reasonable expectation of an event, can never be identical with its certainty. An event in prospect is not an event in fact: And whatever has not already assumed the character of a specific phenomenon, possesses no other identity than that of an idea, in the mind of the projector: Therefore, phenomena, not yet transpired, are no phenomena at all; and however probable their occurrence, cannot make any part of the positive knowledge of mankind. They are, therefore, to be guessed at, as the nearest approach to certainty.

To doubt that the sun will rise tomorrow, would be justly deemed insanity; and yet it is equally absurd to think we know it will. Water has hitherto, when left to the law of gravitation, invariably run down hill, and nothing appears more likely, than that it will continue thus to do; but to know the fact, is not an attribute of ordinary humanity.

The difference, therefore, between knowledge and belief, is too palpable to be mistaken; and may be seen to consist in this—while the former depends exclusively upon an especial examination, and accurate apprehension of the fact itself; the latter is a mere deduction from other facts, to which the particular fact in question is supposed to stand in a logical relation. And so of the events of prophecy, which must have existed in the mind of the prophet, as more or less distinct anticipations, produced by a course of reflection upon the relation existing between apparent causes and unapparent effects.

It appears entirely incontrovertible, whatever attempts may have been made to invalidate it, that no idea was ever acquired, but by the collision of some external circumstance with an organ of sense, or by reflecting upon ideas already thus acquired: Or in other words, we have no means of direct knowledge, except by the aid of our senses, and that too by their direct application to the objects of inquiry, or to their representatives; or of indirect, or inductive, knowledge, except by judicious reflection upon the relations and tendencies of such objects, or upon the ideas they shall have created.

There is perhaps no greater absurdity in Nature, than the idea that mind can anticipate thought. Mind and thought are synonymous, and therefore convertible terms.—Hence it would be no less absurd to say, that mind thinks, while that very contemplation is mind itself, than to say that thought thinks, or that motion moves.

It is true, that mind has been erroneously interpreted as the instrument of thought, which appears to be an injudicious epithet for brain, that is now recognized, by all educated persons, as the exclusive psychological apparatus. In this manner, cause and effect are palpably confounded, and the function of an organ mistaken for the organ itself. Mind is as clearly an organic function as muscular motion; both being phenomena, produced by irresistible impulse upon the thinking and motive organs. Nor can either brain or muscle excite itself to action.—They must passively await the presence of excitation, without which neither would ever act:

To speak physiologically: Man is an aggregate of complicated organism, which is so arranged as that, whilst each individual organic structure possesses a specific identity and functionality, the whole are associated by means of vascular and nervous intercommunication, into an individual, living, thinking, acting machine, whose phenomena are either psychologecal or automatic, or, in other words, voluntary or involuntary; with the former of which only, are we at present concerned.

A voluntary action is that which occurs in consonance with, and as an impulse of, the will, and is primarily produced in the following manner, viz.—An appropriate external stimulus is presented to a healthy organ of sensation; whence a corresponding impulse is received by the nerves, or sentient medium between the world and consciousness; which impulse being transmitted to the brain, a corresponding consciousness, idea or perception is, at once, developed.

Nor can I apprehend any other mode, by which an original, or primitive, idea can have been ever acquired. And yet, this primitive idea may become itself an efficient stimulus to thought—an adequate substitute for physical impulse, in the development of any formal series of reflections. And beside these, there seems to be no natural and apprehensible mode of inducing the state denominated consciousness. What, therefore, is apparently more innocent or judicious, than an inquiry after the peculiar mode by which a reputed supernatural idea may have been acquired? But upon this question, or rather this paradoxical fatuity, Philosophy frowns contemptuously, whilst all Nature is as mute as vacancy itself. No! never has she whispered a thing so senseless as supernatural revelation; nor practiced the servility of owning a superior. And is not man, at best, a humble part of this same adaptive, systematic Nature? And what is all his aggregate biography, but a single paragraph of her voluminous and interminable history? Can he, a mere instrument, like a pair of pincers in his mother's hand, with which to work her purposes, successfully aspire to that which she has not intended? That humanity can acquire a thought, above what Nature can suggest, is a fallacy, at which reflecting infancy should sneer. Prophecy, therefore, can never have been, at best, any thing more than an expression of opinion relative to an anticipated event, of which known circumstances appeared to the reputed seer, to indicate a greater or less probability: For, as we have already heard, certainty with man,

pertains to nothing which has not yet transpired; and even of that, he is too often conscious of misapprehension, not to distrust the infallibility of his senses. It seems to be high time, therefore, that the stultifying phantasm, prophetic, or supernatural, inspiration was effectually exploded, and intellect disenthralled from its superstitious servility. Nor does it seem less derogatory to cultivated common sense, that mankind should admit the occurrence of phenomena, independent and transcendental of Nature's laws.

It is said, that God wrought miracles, in aid of Judaism, and of the subjugation and extermination of those who ventured an opposition to Hebrew robbery and dominion. And what, meanwhile, became of his omnisciency, that he should have wholly overlooked those palpable defects, in both the ethics and theology of Judaism, for which a few years after, he found it indispensable to substitute the novel system called Christianity? And did that project prove abortive, which a senior God had instituted, especially, for the Jew, and which a junior God was miraculously commissioned to enforce? And did God waste a world of pains, in this and various other ways, upon His peculiar people, until His undisguised partiality became a by-word of reproach, and a plausible excuse for atheism; and then, alas, resign them up, with appropriate denunciations, to His satanic adversary for both temporal and eternal ruin? And did he not allow the only Theocracy on earth, the only government, he ever, personally, administered, to be subverted, and its subjects, who had long basked in the

egotizing beams of culpable partiality, to be persecuted, dispersed, enslaved and murdered, by the same pagan idolaters as had been the particular objects of His almighty vengeance? Now, do you seriously believe in the existence of such a god, or in his power to interrupt or modify the laws of Nature; and that for purposes so fatuous or vile, that common justice deprecates, and common sense detests, them? And would a god like this, be fully competent to direct a world's phenomena, so broad, so limitless, that this whole system called our own, is, comparatively, a single atom? But these comparisons are nugatory, since such a god could not produce a spear of grass, nor scarcely tell it from a turnip.

It is also said, that God wrought miracles in order to convince mankind of Christ's divinity, and of Gospel-truth. And with what success, though aided by the fagot and the sword, the genuine disciple of Christianity, of this, or any other, time, would blush to tell. And if we may measure the extent of unbelief, by the deep and reiterated lamentations of the pious; Christendom has dearly paid, perhaps too dearly, for its reformation, however tenaciously its friends may hold the contrary.

The proposition is plausible at least, that no less miracle is required to produce conviction of a superhuman truth, in the mind of an individual, than in the minds of the whole human race—nor can it matter at all, whether the subject of such communication is philosopher or fool; since a supernatural idea, being acquired neither by sensation nor reflection, can stand

in no relation, whatever, to a natural one, nor be modified in the least, by any of the phenomena of Man or Nature.

What worse improvidence, therefore, of either God or man, than to begin to propagate a truth, especially of the Gospel's reputed moment, too late to benefit a hundred generations; and by a method, so defective, that eighteen hundred years have been wasted on its preface—a method inevitably, and proverbially, abortive, without the aid of God's incessant, miraculous interposition, through the medium of His Grace! And if the Gospel-dispensation were made for man's immediate safety, wherefore was God so culpably improvident, as to defer that dispensation for the period of four thousand years, wherein some hundred thousand million souls must have been lost, for want of gospel intervention? Or wherefore all this bustle, about a novel methed of salvation, while the Heathen's piety and the Jew's obedience were adequate to its accomplishment? And is a god of such a character worthy of respect, and his absurdities to be accredited as supernatural and divine phenomena? Or is it not inversely true, that such a god does not exist, except in Superstition's wild imagination, and thus, too palpably preposterous for serious contemplation? And however generally or universally the idea may have been adopted, or venerated, is it at all too sacred for children to break their jests upon?

And yet, is not this fallacious whim personified, the very God both Jews and Christians worship, and to which the work of miracles is imputed?—And to

which the wisest and best of men must bow, in humblest adoration, or be stigmatized as willfully corrupt and dangerous atheists, to shake whose hands is thought, by not a few, a cleanseless contamination?

Superstition seems to have sworn her votaries upon the altar of incorrigible ignorance, never to yield assent to the suggestions of Reason, upon the dogmas of theology; nor to discard a folly she has ever taught.—Nor has that oath been often broken, nor she annoyed by frequent heresy.

But upon the question of the supernatural character of revelation, were all the other, innumerable objections nugatory, the two following appear to be sufficient to invalidate the superstitious dogma. These are the fallibility of the compilers, and the metaphysical ignorance of their authors.

To substantiate the first objection, it should be only necessary to refer to the word *apocryphal*, as applied to the character of religious essays, of both the Old and New Testament eras.

Were it true, that individuals have been supernaturally inspired with ideas, that Nature could never have suggested, and therefore nugatory to common sense; and entirely incommunicable to others, but by the same supernatural process; there is, nevertheless, a serious difficulty presented, in the absence of an infallible criterion by which the uninspired may clearly determine its character: For unless there is something of this kind associated with such unnatural communication, there must be a perpetual liability to mistake, imposture and scepticism. Hence it should not

be denied, that a sufficient test should be connected with divine revelation, or with the revelator himself, to resolve entirely, the doubts of the rankest incredulity. And upon this momentous subject, it seems omniscience would thus have certainly suggested, and omnipotence have promptly instituted.

Now, you will not misunderstand me, when I emphatically declare, in this public position, that, whatever the consequence, I fearlessly assume the responsibility of denying the existence of any such provision, and cast my defiance of controversion, boldly in the teeth of a reputedly infallible Tritheism.

You are all, doubtless, aware, that both the old, and new Testaments were compiled from a great number of miscellaneous manuscripts, differing very widely, from each other, in style, and in moral and religious character. And that from such hetrogeneous mass, those selections were made, which appeared to be most consonant, in the opinion of the compilers, with the genuine spirit of divine truth—that is, truth upon moral and religious subjects. Of these manuscripts, it cannot be doubted, that very many were entirely rejected, on account of the absence of the required characteristic.—Others were believed to possess it, but in too slight a degree to extinguish every possible doubt of their genuineness. Those it would seem, were too highly appreciated, to be altogether discarded; and were, therefore, preserved, and finally arranged under the denomination, Apocrypha. A third class appears to have consisted of those writings, which carried about them the indu-

bitable evidence of supernatural origin, and were compiled under the denominations of The Old—and New—Testaments.

These, however, have undergone, at different times and by different tribunals, several revisions and modifications—So that what has been unsuspiciously adopted, as genuine revelation, at one period, has been rejected as fallacious, or apocryphal, at another. Hence it is a most natural, however injudicious, conclusion, that what are distinguished as the holy scriptures have, at all times, participated of the fallacies, and even absurdities, of the illiterate eras in which they originated, and in which they have been successively, though not successfully, weeded: For notwithstanding they have undergone much advantageous pruning, they have still retained many superfluous and uncomely appendages.

Now, do you not think it most preposterous, that a supernatural discrimination could have suffered the embarrassment of a doubt? Or that there could have remained, under such a criticism, an apocryphal, or doubtful, essay? And yet there are many such, of both the Jewish and Christian scriptures, which have at different periods of religious history, been confidently adopted, and devotionally used, as portions of divine revelation. Hence the conclusion appears to be unavoidable, that the scriptures were compiled, under the fallible direction of mere human judgment; and consequently of no higher authority than any other human speculations. Nor does this consideration, in the least, depreciate their value: For

truth can never be intrinsically modified by the peculiarity of its origin, or mode of communication.—And were it suggested by an idiot or a devil, and in harsh or exquisite poetry or prose, it would be no less valuable in its effects, when adopted, than though it were really communicated by the incomprehensible, if not impracticable method of divine revelation. And this is confidently offered as intrinsic evidence of the fallacy of the aforesaid dogma.

Of the second objection, or the metaphysical ignorance of the biblical writers, very much more ought to be said, in its elucidation, than is compatible with our present opportunity, or the feeble ability of your humble servant. That mankind were anciently and scripturally deemed to be morally and religiously responsible for the character of their belief, admits of no manner of doubt, whilst the validity of any part of the scriptures continues to be acknowledged.

This proposition is not only positively and unequivocally asserted by Christ himself, or by the author of the Gospel, and often repeated by his apostles, but is so common a sentiment in both the old and new Testaments, especially the latter, that I should deem myself justly chargable with a willful insult to your religious education, were I to designate particular instances. Hence, it cannot be denied, that man is positively responsible to his maker, for, at least, his religious opinions and affections, or that the Omniscient Son of God was grossly ignorant of the metaphysical character of his creatures. Nor do I feel the least embarrassment from the predicament in which

this proposition places me; since I deem it wholly unnecessary to review the history of metaphysical fallacies, or to disturb the literary lumber of by-gone ages, under which a superstitious Theology has been indefatigably laboring to bury the question of man's religious irresponsibility. I am confident that no scientific question is less difficult of apprehension than the one under consideration; since it requires nothing more of any individual whatever, in order that he should be able to judge, with sufficient accuracy, of every psychological phenomenon, concerned in its solution, than to watch carefully and impartially, the operation of his own mind, in any given instance of voluntary action. Nor does it matter, in this inquiry, whether a thinking soul, or a thinking brain, is admitted in the premises. In either case, the psychological history is the same; the mental phenomena being developed by the same causes, and in the same order of succession, whether thought is a function of the brain; or of the soul, displaying itself through that medium. Hence we again assume, that thought is not self generative, but entirely dependent upon impulse, for its developement; and, as an exemplification, would offer the following.—

You are doubtless aware that many petrified specimens, or organic remains, of extinct species of vegetables and animals, have been exhumed from deep and solid masses of transition and younger rocks, in various geographical situations upon our globe; and that their examination has not only produced a series of novel reflections among philosophers, but has literal-

ly established a new era in the science of geology; and beside these, has thrown an enormous weight in the scale of probabilities against the Mosaic Cosmogony; and hence against the supernatural character of the Pentateuch. And were you asked, whether you believe that any of these particular reflections and opinions would have occurred, if accident had not exposed the aforesaid petrifactions to human observation; would you hesitate to yield an answer upon the side of its negative?

You are also aware, that, once, the whole human race, who were capable of reflection, believed the earth's surface to be flat, with the slight exception of hill and dale; nor should it be suspected, that you are unacquainted with the circumstances that prove it to be spherical.—And were not these circumstances applied, and reapplied successively, for thousands of years, before they produced a final conviction of the truth? And is it, nevertheless, preposterously pretended, that such conviction could have been otherwise attained—uninduced and self-generated?—Yes, to the deep disgrace of present metaphysical science, it is so! Nor is this the only, nor the silliest dogma, that Prejudice has instituted, for common-sense to sneer at.

Thought has been referred to the brain, whose action, or functional excitation is assumed to be identical with thought, as that of muscle is with motion; nor is the one more capable than the other of originating its own actions.—

For, if the brain were really possessed of such ca-

pacity, it would have been nugatory, for any intellectual purpose whatever, that the organic petrefactions referred to, should have been disinterred from their rocky inclosures that they might be recognized; nor the evidences of the earth's sphericity required, to produce conviction of the fact—nor yet the cogitations of gods or men, to have been expressed, in order to their being fully understood. And, certainly, if there were any other mode of originating ideas than by impulse, human apprehension might be indeed limitless.

Take, if you please, any individual circumstance of your life, in which opinion, preference and will, or determination, have been involved; and see whether its analysis will justify, or not, the prevailing dogma of religious, or even of moral, responsibility!

Admitting what it would be the depth of absurdity to deny, that voluntary actions are never performed without motive; will you tell me whether, of any number of contemplated motives, that of the greatest apparent value, has not always predominated? Are you conscious of having, at any time, manufactured the motives of your own actions? Or have you only judged, more or less accurately, of the comparative value of such motives, as accident has thrown in your way? When were your partialities or prejudices, in the least, modified by your own predetermination? Or, finally, in what particular instance of your life, do you feel assured, that you could have thought or acted differently, without a variation of the attendant circumstances?—And whether those circumstances

were, or were not, subject to the influence of your own volition? And until these questions shall have been answered in behalf of responsibility, man must acknowledge himself to be one of the innumerable products of Nature's plastic energies, which she has forced into existence, and also into the possession of the characteristics of his anomalous being—that he is a creature of circumstance, who thinks and acts consonantly with the affinities, constitutionally established between his own sensibilities and the contingents upon which they may, at any time, infringe. For otherwise he may, and must, assume the prerogative of predetermining his own thoughts, or of contemplating what he will contemplate; and of foreordaining his own actions, independently of impulse, or antecedent causation—that is, in spite of God or Nature: And being thus, unembarrassed by the arbitrary formality of motives, he would be enabled to institute his own contemplative elysium, in spite of the lacerations, physical circumstance should maliciously inflict upon his animal corporation. Nor, whilst unhappiness should be thus left to his own latches, would he be less insane, than though he were to attempt to bite his own nose off, should he fail in the manufacture, or preconcertion of such cogitations as would extinguish the possibility of suffering an unhappy moment.

It is doubtless true, that opinion governs the man, and not man opinion. Opinion is enforced upon the man, and the man impelled thereby. And wherever opinion has been proved to be judicious, by the practical benefits it has produced, it and they have been

honored by the name of virtue; but, on the contrary, whenever it has been erroneous, and its consequences disastrous, it and they have been stigmatized as vice. Hence it may be plausibly concluded, that virtue and vice, or good and evil, have not an intrinsic, but merely a conventional, existence—that being good, which is productive of happiness, and that evil, which impairs it.

But to attempt the clearest possible elucidation of the question of responsibility for mere opinion, or belief, as well as that of directing or modifying its institution; I would be allowed to present you with the following additional illustration.

Suppose yourselves, individually, to have been nurtured, in the strictest tenets of Romanism, with the clearest conviction of the infallibility of the Pope, and of the truth of transubstantiation, or the miraculous transmutation of the flour and wine, constituting its sacramental wafers, into the real flesh and blood of Jesus Christ; and that you doubted not, while partaking of the sacrament, that you were literally cannibalizing upon the cast off corporality of the Son of God! Thus far it is clearly absurd that you should be charged with responsibility for an opinion thrust upon you by your spiritual teachers, and therefore must have innocently acquired; and one, you also deemed so invaluable, that the basest means were more than justified in its support; for thus thought the church.

Suppose you shall have, subsequently, fallen upon some lucid commentary of one of the great reformers

of Popery, that shall have cleared off the opacity of your vision, with the despatch of a successful occulist, whereby you shall have come to detest the opinion you lately thought so valuable! And where is now the responsibility for this new opinion, which the church calls heresy, and deserving of torture and perdition? Did you predetermine it, or design, or institute, the means of its accomplishment? Or were not those means produced by talents much surpassing yours, and dropped, by accident, upon the superstitious path, you were stupidly and contentedly pursuing; and which you ignorantly, but piously believed the only way to heaven?

Having acquired your opinion, you thought it passing strange, that you should have been so obstinately wrong, or so well pleased with so palpable an error. And yet your conscience told you, there was no need of penitence. And had you been a practical inquisitor, and tortured out the lives of countless, conscientious men, for what you deemed the welfare of the church, your worst reflection should have been regret, that your opinions were not sooner changed.—And thus thought Paul, of his Christian persecutions.

In this example, you have also an illustration of the fallacy of an almost universal opinion, that we are happier with our present belief, than we should be with any possible substitute. For it has been shown, that you were not only entirely satisfied with, but obstinately tenacious of your opinions, as papists; and that, as protestants, also, you were not only equally satisfied with your new ones; but were sur-

prised at the grossness of your former errors, and blushed at the recollection of having stupidly adopted them. Opinion, therefore, is not the more satisfactory, for being one thing or another, but for being ours: Hence it should be a matter of indifference, whether we retain our present opinion or not—whether we hold the same perpetually, or change it hourly, so far at least as mere opinion contributes to happines. But you have already heard that there is another, and more substantial, value in opinion, estimated by its salutary influence upon human conduct. Our object, therefore should not be to retain a present opinion, but to acquire a right one, in which our real interest always predominates.

And do you really think it a successful display of what you deem to be infinite wisdom, wherein the incarnate Logos, or wisdom of God, is made to say, that He will reprove the world of sin, because they *believe not* on him—and that they who believe not that he is the Christ *shall* die in their sins, and of course be excluded from paradise?—That he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not *shall* be damned; and that he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not *shall* not see life, &c.; especially, when contrasted with the following, Mark 9. 23: "Jesus said unto him, If thou *canst* believe, all things are possible to him that believeth"? Most certainly the man could believe in the power of Christ to restore the health of his epiliptic son, as readily as he could believe His superhuman character. The first he *might* believe if he could—the latter he *should* believe or be damned.

Did Christ upbraid his appostles, as in Mark 16,14; because they believed not the witnesses to his resurrection, and, nevertheless, condescend to afford Thomas, gratuitous demonstration of the fact, without demanding his belief upon a less consideration; as though unbelief were not altogether reprehensible wherein testimony, however direct and unimpeachable, fails to produce conviction?

And what do you think of the natural, or supernatural, acquirements of the renowned disciple of the ficticious, Jewish Gamaliel, or recompense of God, when he charges his brethren "to take heed, lest there be, in any of them, an *evil heart* of unbelief," to which abundant reference is made, as the seat of propensities, affections, preference, will and even opinion itself, leaving the brain, which is the exclusive psychological organ, without a single function to perform?

The bible, therefore, promulgates opinions, whose absurdity should have secured their explosion, even among the children of the peasantry, centuries ago: And yet their appreciation with theology renders them, apparently, too invaluable to be voluntarily relinquished, or even wrenched from the gripe of a superstitious obstinacy, which tradition has so long petted, that it has become altogether incorrigible.

It should be deemed no less than blasphemous, in these latter days of improved erudition, to reiterate the preposterous fallacies of reputed divine revelation, as though God were once so ignorant or abusive, as to have adopted or promulgated them, to his own,

and his creature's shame. Insanity and idocy, only, should be excused for charging God with having wrought a fallacy, or committed a mistake. No! that which is untrue in Nature, a God can never have adopted, nor inculcated. The foregoing, therefore, are human fallacies; anatomical, physiological and metaphysical errors, of which the Clergy, from ignorance or prejudice, or both, continue to be madly tenacious, in spite of reiterated confutation: And in the very language, that science has long since rendered nugatory, they pretend to philosophize and instruct an illiterate laity, whose stupidity fattens upon their theological and metaphysical stultiloquence.

And here, you will permit me to give a brief recapitulation of my sentiments relative to that most stupid of all serious questions, viz., that of moral culpability for mere abstract opinion; which is, metaphysically interpreted, a state of mind either favorable, or unfavorable, to whatever suggestion or proposition it shall have been presented with—the former constituting belief, the latter unbelief. If, therefore, a person cannot institute an opinion antecedently to suggestive circumstances, and even contrary to their natural tendencies, it is clear, that belief and unbelief, in all possible cases, are irresistibly forced upon him; and hence the charge of moral or religious responsibility must be entirely nugatory.

The mind, as has been already said, is dormant during the absence of excitation; nor can opinion be ever formed without a presentation to the mind, of more or less of those circumstances, which have ac-

quired the name of evidence. As well might mathematics be instituted without numbers, or geometry without figure. Hence, if opinion, or belief and disbelief cannot occur, in the absence of what the mind recognizes as testimony, which would be equivalent to an opinion without an object, it must depend, incontrovertibly, and exclusively, upon circumstances, over which the mind possesses no modifying control. Responsibility, therefore, for the formation, or possession, of opinion, is one of the senseless dogmas of illiterate superstition; of which it is disgraceful to acknowledge, that it is, yet, to be exploded: For, if it is culpable, in any case, to have acquired an erroneous belief, a single exception to the rule is altogether inadmissible; and hence culpability must be as certainly, if not as momentously, involved in an erroneous opinion of astronomy, or chemistry, as of theology or morality. And who, allow me to ask, is so unreasonable, as to reproach a cobbler, with his ignorance of Sir Isaac Newton's Principia; or a back-woods log-roller, with that of Sir Humphrey Davy's, or Justus Liebig's Agricultural Chemistry; of which, in all probability, neither has ever heard? Yet, if the scriptures are literally true, an erroneous opinion of the personality, or divinity of Jesus Christ, which, by the by, stands upon the same foundation as any other, is to be visited with the amazingly disproportioned penalty of eternal damnation. And, most certainly, if belief can be instituted without apparent evidence, it can be so, in, direct opposition to it. And, hence, a Lazarus might have sanely believed, that he

was snugly deposited in Abraham's bosom. Nor, upon this principle, would the literal incarnation of the spirit of evil find the least inconvenience in believing himself, to be the immaculate Son of God. And so Napoleon might, if he would, have believed his ruinous defeat at Waterloo a splendid victory; and that his murderously unexampled retreat from Moscow, and his exiles to Elba, and St. Helena, as so many magnificent triumphs.

Now, religious infidelity consists, in fact, of a disbelief of these and similar contemptible absurdities, which Theology has arbitrarily and successfully imposed upon mankind: Nor does it involve the slightest distrust of a single truth in Nature. It frankly admits all the testimony afforded by Nature, and all the inductions Reason has been able to draw therefrom, in favor of the existence of a God, which it is, however, entirely unable to distinguish from the idea of ultimate causality, whereat every continuous inquiry must finally terminate; and at which every series of phenomena must have commenced.

Religious faith, on the contrary, appears to have nothing to do with Nature, or with any of her palpable realities; but professes to spurn them, as objects entirely unworthy of its exalted contemplation! It constitutes one of the three rundles of the ladder, upon which a fictitious Spiritualism anticipates its ascent to a fictitious Paradise. And yet, so inconsistent are spiritualists, that while they decry the world and the flesh, as being too uncleanly for the residence and habitation of their sanctified souls, they are often

found so firmly clinched to its veriest corruptions, that Death itself can scarcely unloose their gripe! Yes, while they are importuning you to relinquish your attachment to "the things of time and sense" for a more exalted devotion to God and spiritualism, they are doubtless sometimes, much more seriously devising some artful plan, to circumvent a neighbor in a bargain, and thereby transfer, unpaid for, another's property to themselves: Nor is it dealing unfairly with spiritualists, an occasional, magnanimous exception having been admitted, to say that, while they point with one hand toward an imaginary heaven, they are literally committing felony with the other. Such is the apparent practical result of both Theism and Tri-theism, notwithstanding they assume to have been instituted and patronized of God; sustained by miracles; and verified by martyrdom; and all, especially, for man's regeneracy, from a *state of nature, to a state of grace!*

And, in the face of all this palpable invalidation, the religious Fanatic, nevertheless, believes all truth, superior to that which ministers to the welfare of the beast, to be safely wrapped up within the folds of a stultifying and maddening spiritualism! Wherefore then, I boldly ask, should the slightest blush suffuse the cheek of him, who is peevishly taunted with his infidelity? Should he not rather glory in his, little less than miraculous, emancipation from the intellectual thraldom to which his race has so long, tamely and shamefully submitted? And let me indulge the hope, that your affirmative assent is unembarrassed by a momentary doubt!

LECTURE V.

THE CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE OBJECTS OF RELIGIOUS FAITH CONTINUED.

Scepticism has been constantly, and, doubtless, with no little propriety, taunted with its ignorance of both, the letter and spirit of those scriptures it would, as is said, ruinously, if not maliciously, invalidate. But admitting the justice of the general charge, that sceptics are poorly read, in, both, the scriptures and their voluminous, elaborate commentaries; the rule has, nevertheless, been interrupted by frequent individual exceptions, wherein may have been found enough of biblical erudition to have done credit to the cowl or suplice—to pope or bishop. And yet the general reading of those scriptures, superficial as it may have been, has, doubtless, engendered and nourished the present luxuriant Infidelity, that threatens, ere long, to supersede the superstitions of Christianity; and that, without detracting from its ethical, and only, truth: Therefore, whilst the Christian solicits attention to the Scriptures, as an infallible mean of instituting and confirming spiritual faith, the scep-

tic may, with, at least, an equal confidence, advance the same proposition, to invalidate their superhuman character: And whilst the one is laboriously searching out biblical *concordances;* the other, with much less labor, may sate himself with the *contrary.* Apply yourselves, therefore, both to the volume of Nature, and that of reputed, divine revelation, perusing and comparing them, carefully, page by page, that you may, judiciously, decide, how far the truths of the former corroborate the hypotheses of the latter! Nor distrust the validity of this assertion.—That Nature is one great, infallible truth—a magnificent aggregation of all the miscellaneous particulars of herself and history; constituting the sole criterion, by which all human truth, of both thought and action, should be tested! For veritable thoughts and opinions are but Nature spiritualized—literal truths accurately copied by the brain! However ample, the apparent circumference of our rule, religious faith is, nevertheless, excluded from its limits. One of its earliest and warmest advocates has, most aptly, defined it in Heb. 11, 1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And, in this, we have a striking instance of old fashioned, logical acumen, which, by the by, is shamefully in fashion yet; especially, in the service of theism!

Two propositions are, pretty clearly, included in the apostle's definition of faith; first, that it is the substance, and second, that it is the evidence, of a thing—or, that it is, both, the substance and evidence, that our *confident* expectations will be verified; the

slightest analysis of which, must clearly expose the inanity, if not the insanity, of its author.

By what sophistical necromancy, a literal substance can be wrought, out of mere mental confidence, or how mind can be transformed to matter, can be known, only, to supernaturalism! Nor can it be reconciled, with any of the views of common sense, that faith is the evidence of any truth whatever, except that the mind has been, antecedently, influenced by real or imaginary testimony in favor of the event hoped for! And yet this sonorous inanity—this rhetorical nugacity, has been pompously enunciated from every pulpit in Christendom, and upon every convenient occasion, as being especially imbued with the awful spirit of divine wisdom!

Faith, of whatever kind, or degree, is nothing, more nor less, but a confident expectation of the literal occurrence of some anticipated event; and is, therefore, neither the substance, nor the evidence of such event; being itself as fallacious as any other attribute of humanity. But if religious faith possesses the efficiency imputed to it by the Scriptures, and yet can claim no strength, superior to that of any other; for that faith is still but faith, whatever subject shall have developed it, nor always stronger in the right than wrong; then, Monomania should never err; Licentiousness be disappointed; nor Parsimony be unhappy: Nor should Millerians, or Second-adventists, remain, in lingering disappointment, for having failed of their anticipated translation to the skies!

But to return to the Pentateuch, where Criticism

will find no want of objects, on which to vent its acrimony.

At the termination of the deluge, we find the human race reduced to eight individuals of a single family, from three of whom the world was to be paternally indebted for its repopulation: And yet, but about a century had elapsed, when Babylon the great —the queen of cities—a peopled world in miniature, stood, gigantically, astride the majestic river of Eden; and, in her vain assumption of omnipotence, mocked at invasion, and laughed at the reiterated, prophetic threatenings of the Almighty.—Around and in her midst, arose a wall, in competition with the clouds, and vying with a mountain's strength; whose hundred brazen gates yawned at a population whose numbers historians have not ventured to compute: And, within its westerly enclosure, sublimely stood the towering Babel-pyramid, that reared its ostentatious hight, in sacreligious nearness to the throne of God. Nor yet so near that Omnipercipience could clearly view it from its own Empyrean; and therefore "God came *down*, to *see* the City and the Tower." And because it was so fearfully indicative of the almighty power of human strength combined, as to threaten Omnipotence with successful competition, God resorted to the *surprisingly ingenious* expedient, of confounding, or diversifying, human dialect, in order to disperse its dangerous population, and divide its threatening enterprise. And so successful was the project, that Ninus, the son of him who founded Babylon, successfully emulated the enterprise of his

father, in the erection of magnificent Ninevah—scarcely inferior to Babylon itself: Nor could Egyptian Thebes have been much less, or later in its origin, than those already named!

Now, would you not deem yourselves insulted, were you offered an opinion of the absurdity and abortiveness of the foregoing project; or of the utter inconsistency of the biblical record, which preposterously derives all this immensity of people, wealth and art from Noah's sons, within the period Chronology designates, or one hundred and two years? Are you aware, that all the population, which could have resulted from the six prolific individuals of Noah's family, at the rate of doubling in sixteen years, an increase more rapid than was ever known, would number less than five hundred, in a single century? And do you still believe great Babylon was peopled thence; and that her millions were from Noah's loins, in contravention of Nature's institutes; nor yet, a miracle pretended to be wrought, in aid of its accomplishment?—Then you may fearlessly proceed to swallow, both, Jonah and the whale, as a very feasible employment for so capacious a credulity!

And again; whose dialect, but that of the builders of the sacreligious edifice, was confounded? Or were it of the whole population of the great city, or even of Chaldea itself; that were but an inconsiderable portion of the inhabitants of a populated world, as the Hebrew tradition explicitly and repeatedly declares that ancient one to have been. And, should Ignorance venture upon a contradiction, it may be

asked, where were Armenia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Aram, or Syria, Persia, or the land of Nod, Egypt and Ethiopia? Were they not already planted with towns and cities; and also bloated with a population, from which millions could be spared for defense, or depredation? And when Abram first passed through the land of promise, were not the Canaanite and the Perizzite already there, and in countless numbers too? And were not the Horites, Amalekites and Amorites settled upon their borders? What better than a senseless fable, therefore, is the story of the confusion of human dialect?

I will not stop here to recount the contemptuous reflections, elicited by the palpable inconsistencies of Abram's going with his family and effects, from Haran, in Mesopotamia, to a position between Bethel and Ai, or Hai, in the land of Canaan, a distance, by any practicable route, of more than five hundred miles, and that in a country too, which Josephus says "it requires much time to pass through; it being tedious traveling, both in winter for depth of clay, and in summer for want of water; and besides this, for the robberies there committed, which are not to be avoided by travelers, but by caution beforehand." And this long, difficult and dangerous journey accomplished, without a single incident, worthy to be recorded; nor but two short lines appropriated to the whole account, viz. "And they went forth, to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

Now do you not deem this quite too insignificant a

journal, for divine Inspiration to have suggested of so inevitably eventful a peregrination? And do you not think, that Contempt would debase itself, were it to condescend to scowl upon so utterly worthless an item of civil history?

I do not intend, in these essays, to commit a waste of your, or my own, time, by noticing unimportant discrepancies; nor, especially, by a snarling pedagogical criticism of mere style: But a specimen or two just now presents itself, of quite too singular a character to, entirely, escape remark.

In Gen. 9, 23, we read, "And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and *went backward*, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their *faces were backward*, and they saw not their father's nakedness." In order to make sense of this quotation, it is necessary that the word backward, as repeated in the same sentence, should be inversely interpreted in its two positions, i. e. if those two sons of Noah went backward, in approaching their father, they could not, at the same time, have conveniently looked backward, or in the same direction without seeing the very nakedness it appears to have been their object to avoid. But this is merely a blunder, and not a falsehood: And yet, it seems exceptionable, that Inspiration should commit the slightest blunder.

It seems an instance of somewhat more than austere justice, that Ham shall have been cursed with perpetual servitude to his brethren, for having accidentally, or even purposely, seen his drunken father's naked-

ness; and, therefore, how inexcusably absurd, to accuse a being of reputed infinite justice, of having arbitrarily transferred a penalty from the immediate transgressor, (admitting Ham to have been such) to his unborn, unparticipant, innocent and irresponsible posterity! And do you seriously believe that God, intentionally, dictated this palpable slander of himself; and that too, with the fallacious expectation, that it would escape detection by our undiscriminative race? Then you may, with the utmost consistency, admit the accuracy of the Jewish description of Him; and that He had really forgotten, or never knew, how cunning, an intercourse with Satan would make mankind.

We were, however, agreeably disappointed upon meeting with the subsequent declaration, that the subject of the aforesaid condemnation should, nevertheless, be also the servant of the Lord: For it is written, in verse 26, of the chapter referred to, "And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan, (Ham's posterity) shall be his servant." That is, in its only grammatical acceptation, the culprit was sentenced, not to be the servant of Shem, but of the Lord God of Shem; a somewhat singular dispensation toward the subject of so serious a retribution as that of perpetual slavery to one's kindred. Nor should we believe that Noah was better than insane, having just awaked from a state of drunken stupidity, to the consciousness of deserving himself to be cursed, to utter such an unnatural denouncement, were it not a matter of subsequent history, that Ca-

naan was really invaded, conquered, enslaved and murdered. And were the question asked by whom: Would you not very confidently reply, by the descendants of Shem, through the loins of Eber or Heber and Peleg; and meanwhile think yourselves fully justified by the letter of the record? Then you would be, for once, palpably mistaken. For to your utter confusion, and that of all believers in the consistency of Jewish supernaturalism, you will find in the following, or 27th verse, this declaration, that "God shall enlarge *Japheth*, and he (Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his (Japheth's) servant;" which seems not, however, to have been historically verified.

It is explicitly declared by this theological oracle, that Eber was the father of the Hebrews, and the great-grand-son of Shem; from whom Peleg was the first, and Abram the sixth generation: And that the Hebrews, or descendants of Shem, were the conquerors and enslavers of unfortunate Canaan. But the record is a direct contradiction of this, wherein it says, as above, "that Japheth, (or Japhet) shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his (that is Japheth's servant:" Japheth being, meanwhile, represented as the *father of the nations* who inhabited the isles of the Gentiles; or, as Josephus says, the father of the Galls, Sythians, Medes, Greeks, Thracians, Cyprians, &c. &c. by whom the primitive Canaanites seem not to have been at all disturbed.

It is certain, therefore, that the texts under consideration, are grossly inconsistent, either in their construc-

tion or import. They either do not convey the meaning of the writer, or he was guilty of promulgating falsehoods. For, it is, at best, historically true, that the Canaanites were neither the servants of God nor Japheth.

Thus ends our criticism of the syntax adopted by supernatural Inspiration; but not with its other numerous connections.

I would be indulged in a single remark, upon the discrepancy observable between the pentateuch of Moses, and the history of Josephus, in regard to the length of each of the seven generations between Shem and Terah.

While the former allows but thirty-two years and a half, as the average length of a generation, the latter extends it to a little less than one hundred and thirty-two. Arphaxad is also declared by the former, to have been born but two years after the deluge, while the latter, as emphatically, declares it to have been twelve. This may be taken as very plausible evidence, at least, that different, if not numerous traditions had been preserved of the same historical events, respecting the Hebrew people.

Now, it is recorded of the patriarchs of these seven generations, that they lived to the average age of three hundred and thirty years; not, however gradually decreasing, as Josephus declares, but between the consecutive ones of Eber and Peleg, abruptly reduced to little more than one half; or from 464, to 239, years. And do you think it credible, that, while human life was prolonged to 330 years, ~~that~~ connubial eligibility

shall have arrived earlier than when it was abridged to 120, as the case appears to have been with Moses and his cotemporaries? And here I am reminded of a somewhat striking disparity between the account given by Moses and Josephus, respecting the time and manner of the aforesaid abridgement of human life.

We find, agreeable to the biblical chronology, that, in the year two thousand three hundred and forty nine before the present era, God said "my Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be *a hundred and twenty years.*" At what period of human history, this decree is to be literally and permanently enforced, remains for futurity to determine, since it has not been verified in the past.

Subsequently to this declaration, Hebrew genealogy informs us, that the average length of human life, during eleven generations, was three hundred and five years nearly. And we learn from the poetry of David, Ps. 90, 10; That the days of man's years were three score years, and ten; and that if by reason of strength, they were extended to fourscore years, yet their strength was labor and sorrow; for it was soon cut off, and they were flown away. Hence it may be very reasonably concluded, that, during the last three thousand years, the period of human life has been very nearly as it is at present; and therefore the validity of Inspiration, in this instance, apparently, not a little suspicious. But Josephus, failing as may be supposed, to find, amongst the traditions of his countrymen, a satisfactory reason, for the abridgment of

human life, has employed his own ingenuity, with laughable success, in constructing one, viz., because Moses happened to live one hundred and twenty years, God, therefore, in respect of him, determined that to be the length of human life: A most exalted idea of Deity, and of the motives by which He is actuated. Another circumstance also, which bears strongly upon the validity of the Mosaic account of the shortness of the seven generations, between Shem and Terah, is, that the average length of the eight subsequent ones, or those from Terah to Moses, inclusive, was about 46 1-4 years, or nearly 13 3-4 longer than the preceding, which seems to be altogether dissonant with the principle of gradual abridgment, therein clearly inculcated.

This however, though apparently too absurd to have been committed by divine Inspiration, is comparatively too trifling to expend a serious objection upon. And thus, it may be said of its innumerable associates; such as the profane implication of God in the fraudulent imposture, practiced upon the unwary Egyptian King, wherein, at Abram's instigation, Sarai disavowed her connubial relationship, and palpably, as did her husband, also, perverted the truth, by an avowal of consanguinity that did not exist; for she was not his father's, but his uncle's daughter. And do you think it probable, that God connived with such a black-leg cheat as Abram, to circumvent, abuse defraud and frighten honest Pharaoh? And such he surely was, for aught the record tells us: For it is a fair conclusion from history itself, that the custom

then, not only excused, but even justified Pharaoh's contemplated intercourse with Sarai, had she been unmarried. Wherefore then, was Pharaoh *plagued with great plagues*? Was it as a punishment for the witless confidence he placed in the word of God's particular favorite; as though he were himself responsible for a mere contemplated delinquency; and that too, one into which he had been cheated, by the willful misrepresentation of *righteous* Abram? Or did God, really, contrary to any rational expectation of him, suggest the expedient of a palpable falsehood, and a most reprehensible fraud, in order to subserve the interests of a favorite, which could not have been honestly accomplished; thus admitting Omniscience to have fallen into a dilemma, wherein, infinite justice was unavoidably sacrificed to the imbecility of almighty power? But this was a Hebrew god, from which nothing better could have been rationally expected: And yet both orthodox and unorthodox theology owns such a character to be the object of its most pious veneration; and would damn, to endless wo, whoever ventures a dissent from the justice of its claim! Alas, that superstitious Tyranny shall have scourged mankind, so long and safely; nor even now, afford a hope that its dotage will ever yield a chance for successful revolution.

But what is stranger still, in this most strange narration, (especially wherein a Jewish god's insanity is not concerned) is that Sarai should have retained, until her ninetieth year, and in that prematuring climate too, so many of the fascinations of her youthful beau-

ty, as to supersede, with king Abimelech, the fairest of all the countless damsels he might command; and who, without a question, as the eastern fashion was, were emulous of domestication, within the precincts of his harem, or moral slaughter-house.

What induced Abram to go *into the south*, in a journey from Egypt to Canaan, situated as those places are in relation to each other, i. e. east north east, and west south west, having Ramesees or its neighborhood for the Egyptian extremity, whereby distance and difficulties must have been continually increased, is a question, apparently somewhat difficult of solution.

Again—Do you believe that Abram and his nephew, Lot, acquired in Egypt, during a residence, scarcely more than sufficient to relate the incredible story, such numbers of "sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and she-asses, and camels, that thel and, about Bethel and Ai, was not able to bear them—And that, notwithstanding the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land," they successfully assumed the ownership of the country, and peaceably appropriated its produce to themselves? It must have been no common enterprise, that made these Hebrews so quickly and immensely rich! For were Pharaoh, really so contemptible a dupe as to have been cheated into an undeserved liberality to Abram, while the Hebrew's willfully corrupt perversion of the truth, ought to have obtained his imprisonment in its stead; accounting thus, for his pecuniary success, the question still remains, how Lot should also have become

so rich, notwithstanding Pharaoh, most judiciously, banished them all his country, as soon as he became acquainted with their dangerous duplicity. And yet you are obnoxious to the uncomely epithets, infidel and heretic, unless you believe that these two Hebrews drove countless flocks and herds, from Egypt to the land of Canaan; and, unmolested, fed them there, amongst the towns and cities of its native population, and, without rebuke, monopolized between them, a peopled territory, much more extensive than a petty kingdom of that ancient time. And thus the case is biblically reported; Or what meant Abram, when he thus exclaimed? "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, I will go to the left." Or wherefore does the record say, that "Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan—and dwelled in the cities of the plain:" And that kings and people cheerfully surrendered their possessions to these unceremonious intruders.

And was it consonant with the genius of the times, or the character of human nature, that these two Chaldeans, themselves vagrants, should have induced an army of free Egyptians, (for slaves were at the command of others) to abandon their homes and country, for the very unseductive consideration of becoming the servants of strangers, and perhaps of vagabonds, in a strange, if not a barbarous, land? And is it consistent with the fashion of those ancient, patriarchal times, where Youth was, not only, taught an

impious respect for age; but when it was indebted to obedience for life itself, that experienced Age should voluntarily disclaim respect, and surrender its authority, opinions and partialities to youthful inexperience, as Abram appears to have done, with regard to his nephew Lot?

It is not to be expected, that the most ignorant and enthusiastic devotee of Judiasm, will presume upon the fictitious excuse, for his favorite patriarch, that the territory of Canaan was, at the time in question, an uninhabited desert, and therefore rightfully subject to the occupancy of whoever would take the trouble to sit down upon it. On the contrary, he must feel himself effectually refuted, by the revelations of his own oracle, which emphatically declare that five distinct, (though doubtless petty) monarchies were already established, within the limits of the land of promise; beside a much greater number upon its immediate borders: And to which may be added an enumeration of cities, emulating both the antiquity and population of the oldest and greatest of gray-haired Egypt.

Notwithstanding the foregoing account is particularly obnoxious to the severest criticism, it may, nevertheless, be deemed the veriest sublimation of consistency, when compared with that given in the following chapter, Gen. 14; wherein it is recorded, that the several kings of the earliest and most numerously populated countries of Asia, combined their military forces, in a marauding expedition of a thousand miles, against a half dozen tribes of Canaanitish sava-

ges. And you will allow me here to express my doubts, whether the writer, compiler, translator, or any credentive individual of its millions of readers, has ever seriously contemplated the absurdities of this particular chapter, which ought to have shamed Munchausen himself, had he been its reader, out of his comparatively puny attempts at the marvelous and absurd.

Here are four kings, represented as personally leaving their own fertile, rich and populated plains, including an aggregate territory of more than twenty-two thousand square miles, or nearly thirty times the area of all Judea, in order to prosecute, at least, a twelve-month's expedition against, what must have been, at that time, and with them, unheard of kings and nations; and that with an army, although nations had combined to form it, so verily contemptible, that the tythe of a single household was able to conquer and disperse it, with as much safety and expedition, as though it were a flock of sheep.

It is also said, that this combined army of Persians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, &c., passed entirely through the land of Canaan, from north to south, by the way of Ham, Ashteroth Karnaim, Kiriathaim and Mount Seir, unto El-paran, or God of beauty, which is by the wilderness, (of Paran) a place, by the by, whose locality is not anywhere designated; pillage and extermination, meanwhile, marking their murderous progress; that they returned, (from where is only to be imagined) and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, or the Waters of strife, noted as being about

fifteen miles west of Mount Hor, in the desert of Zin, more than a hundred miles of reputedly impracticable desert intervening, between it and the nearest boundary of the land of Canaan. And what sent them there, neither human nor superhuman sense has ventured to suggest. But what is most singular is, that while there, they shall have destroyed two nations, or tribes in different directions, and at very considerable distances. And thus it reads: "And they returned and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar."

Now, this text appears not to be susceptible of any other plausible interpretation than the following, viz: First, That these invaders came upon Kadesh, on their return. The query, therefore is, from whence? And the answer is to be found, if anywhere, in the immediate context, which reads thus: "And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims, or *giants*, in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims, or *door-posts*, in Ham, and the Emims, or *terrors*, in Shaveh Kiriathim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness." *And they returned to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh.* Here then, lies the difficulty with our first proposition; that En-mishpat, or Kadesh, is a great way farther from Canaan, than any part of the wilderness (of Paran) by which El-paran is said to have been situated; and, therefore, not very conveniently fallen upon, in the manner described. Nor, second, can it be more

satisfactorily settled, by an arbitrary transfer of the wilderness of Zin, upon whose easterly border Kadesh is situated, to an unnatural position between Idumea and the country of Amalek. For it would be passing strange that the Amorites, who dwelt in Hazezon-tamar, should be destroyed at Kadesh, situated, at least sixty miles south of it; and, according to a very plain interpretation, not less than one hundred and forty, with an extenstve intervening wilderness: Or, to adopt a vulgar truism, it appears quite improbable, that these marauders destroyed men and places where they were not.

This story then, in plain English, reads thus: The invading army passed through the land of Canaan, from north-east, to south-west; thence south-east, through the territories of the Amalekites and Idumeans, to En-mishpat, upon the east border of the desert of Zin, a distance from Canaan, as we have already seen, of, at least, a hundred miles, having left the desert of Paran on their right. That here, they destroyed the Amalekites, situated a hundred miles to the north-west; and also the Amorites at the north-west extremity of the Dead sea, and little less than a hundred miles, by any practicable route, from the devoted city of Sodom. Hence the enemy must have passed and repassed, both Sodom and Gomorrah; and subsequently, retraced the aforesaid distance, [admitting that they committed depredations at Hazezon-tamar,] in order to sack these two great cities, which it appears, they effectually accomplished. And all this protracted, successive, murderous invasion prosecuted

in the very neighborhood of Abram, without his being apprised of such an expedition, until "there came one, that had escaped," and told him of the overthrow and ravage of the cities; and also of the capture and abduction of his nephew Lot.

"And when Abram heard that his brother (nephew) was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen," &c. And in this there seems to be an inconsistency, that must puzzle the very necromancy of Theology to rectify. How is it possible, it may be asked, that Abram should have had three hundred and eighteen men of war born in his own house, which requires the admission of an equal number of coeval females; so that of persons of all ages, required in the premises, the patriarch's family must have consisted of more than twelve hundred.—A notable family, to be sure, for the time and circumstances; and yet Orthodox Credulity finds no difficulty in swallowing it. It may be further remarked of this affair, that Abram's wonderful defeat of the combined Asiatic army, was effected antecedently to his cohabitation with Sarai's Egyptian handmaid, whose son, Ishmael, was born when Abram was eighty-six years old; he having, as Josephus relates, been driven from his home in Mesopotamia, by a persecution raised against his superior knowledge, at the age of seventy-five. The interval, therefore, between his emigration, in the character of a disinherited fortune-hunter, and his magnificent military exploit, can have been but about ten years.—A period scarcely adequate to the rearing, from birth, of

six hundred and thirty-six persons, male and female, of an age fit for war, or from twenty, to fifty years. Nor is the difficulty susceptible of any rational solution whatever, except upon the principle of miraculous interposition, which was neglected to be introduced upon this particular occasion.

Upon the fictitious nonsense, about the king of Salem, we may be allowed to present Theology with the following interrogation. And who was this wonderful Melchizedek—and whence and wherefore, this archetype of Christ—this reference and exemplar of all future piety—this righteous king and priest of the most high God, presiding over a Gentile people, with whom God was a stranger; and to whom even his name was yet unknown, and who were already sentenced to extermination, for their incorrigible, *predetermined* impiety, which God himself was unable, or unwilling to reform.

To contemplate this righteous, unbegotten, unprocreant king of a tribe of pagan savages, in the character of high-priest of an undeveloped theology; and offering sacrifice in the unknown name of an unknown God, appears not much unlike the Genius of future science seeking a Golgotha, as the theater of its literary enterprise.

Again, Gen. 15, 13, "And he (God) said unto Abram, know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall *afflict them four hundred years.*"

Now this declaration of the Almighty must be admitted to refer to the subjugation of the Israelites, in

Egypt, some two hundred years after, or to no event that human history has ever recorded.

This period of four hundred years is not that, however, to which the Scriptures testify. At Ex. 12. 40, it thus reads: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." And a corresponding declaration, in the character of a reference, is found at Gal. 3, 17. And as though it were intended to establish a palpable disagreement of relation, a reference, in Acts 7, 6, is also made to the period of four hundred years. Nor is the difficulty at all alleviated by a reference to the narrative of the Jewish historian, whose authority, especially upon the point in question, should not be treated with indifference. He says that the whole period, from Abram's going out of Haran of Mesopotamia, to the exodus of the Israelites, was four hundred and thirty years; the half of which, or two hundred and fifteen years only, were expended in the latter place. Nor is it a reasonable conclusion, that the Hebrews were enslaved by the Egyptians, until the death of Joseph, on whose account they are said to have been particularly favored. Now Joseph's death occurred when he was 110 years old, or seventy years after his father and family removed from Canaan to Egypt. It is hence, chronologically true, that the term of actual, Hebrew slavery could not have exceeded two hundred and fifteen years, less by the aforesaid seventy, or one hundred and forty-five; a number, essentially different from those of the Scriptures. Nor can there be a reasonable doubt, that the

Jewish historian's is the most reasonable account. For there were but three generations between Jacob and Moses, viz., Levi, Kohath and Amram, which, if we allow the most reasonable term of forty-five years for each, will amount to one hundred and thirty-five, adding to which eighty, the age of Moses at the time of the exodus, we have two hundred and fifteen; the number of years appropriated by Josephus; and, doubtless, the most satisfactory conclusion, the question will admit of.

Again, verse 18: "In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates." How punctually, or consistently, this pledge of the Almighty was redeemed, consonantly with its intelligible import, may be safely left to the decision of each individual, who shall have made himself, at all, acquainted with Jewish political history. The entire invalidation of the foregoing announcement is contained in this emphatic, historical declaration. That the Jews, at no time, from their Mosaic introduction into the land of Canaan, until their final overthrow and dispersion by the Roman Titus, adopted the nationalizing policy of colonization, or of establishiug territorial possession, beyond the narrow, geographical limits of their own blessed Palestine: And that the few insignificant conquests, they were enabled to effect in Syria, Arabia and Egypt, passed away, like the vapor of a summer morning.

We do not omit to notice the following, or 16th

chapter, because it is barren of food for Criticism; but that it is too insipid to interrupt our pursuit of more exquisite viands, we smell amongst its younger relatives. All but a single comment, therefore, we will forego, viz: That Abram is herein represented as having set the first example of bigamy; which, if true, would seem to smack of inconsistency, in God's peculiar favorite—the acknowledged patriarch of the very christianity by which it is prohibited. But this too, Theology receives, as being geometrically right; or right, in all its parts and bearings. And here, I may not omit to notice a particular corroboration of a former remark, that Abram's sojourn in Egypt must have been, at most, a short one—scarcely longer than to have afforded opportunity for relating his story. "And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, *after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan*, and gave her to her husband, Abram, to be his wife," of whom Ishmael was born the following year, or when Abram was eighty six years old; leaving, apparently, a very inadequate opportunity for the accumulation of wealth, in Egypt.

Again, the 8th verse of the 17th chapter reads thus: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a *stranger*, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession."

That Abram shall have been deemed a stranger in a country, no more extensive than Canaan, over most of which for ten successive years, his, or his nephew's, countless animals must have roved for sustenance; and through the whole length of which he had

himself tracked an army of invaders to its utter defeat and dispersion, is not a little difficult to admit. Nor do we think it needs but common sense and knowledge, to determine how very imperfectly this promise of the Almighty has been fulfilled. And yet the second-sight of Spiritualism sees, as clearly as it does its own infallibility, that this has been, or is to be, punctiliously performed.

In the 18th chapter, it is written, verse 1st, "And the Lord appeared unto him" (Abraham)—verse 2d, in the form of three men; and verse 8th, that "they did eat." It really seems somewhat dissonant with the most improved present state of opinion, that God should have found it necessary to assume the form of three men, in order to succeed in making a single communication: And more especially, that these mere forms should have positively devoured a whole calf, with adequate bread and trimmings. It, unquestionably, requires a great deal of stupidity or credulity to believe this ghostly gormandizing! And though it is not scripturally asserted, that these aparitions actually ate the whole calf; yet it is both scripturally and rationally admissible, that, with their almighty appetites and capacities, they might have eaten a whole calf, and even a whole herd, if they would—at least as well as to have eaten at all.

And does it appear entirely consistent with a rational idea of God, that, as in verse 13th, the Almighty should have really enquired of Abram, wherefore Sarah laughed; and that too, with the eternal foreknowledge, that the great-great-grandmother of the Son of God would answer falsely?

At verse 14th, the question is asked, by God himself, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" And what could have been more absurd than this inquiry, when addressed to those oriental savages? They might, with quite as much propriety, have been asked if they could calculate an eclipse, or measure the diameter of the sun: For they did not yet, possess the lean advantage of the fallacies, that Moses afterwards promulgated; and, therefore could have had no other notions of God's character, than he had already revealed to them. And even Moses himself seems not to have had ~~no~~ an idea of God's omnisciency, nor omnipercipiency; since, in verses 20 and 21, God is made to declare that, because of the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of their very grievous sin, "I will *go down* now, and *see* whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."

This language, which is impiously detractive of God's admissible character, could never have been adopted but by the extremest Ignorance or Depravity! Nor did God ever make so contemptible a revelation of himself! But, to resume our acquaintance with God's spiritual proxies, or rather his shadowy self. That the three *men* before spoken of, were surprisingly singular personages, even for ghosts, appears from the following. In verse 22d it is said, in conclusion of God's determination to *go down* to Sodom, and *inquire* out the truth, "And the *men* turned their faces from thence and *went* toward Sodom." And meanwhile, God is prudently managing his own affairs,

in his own proper person, as we learn, at the close of the same verse, which says, "But Abram stood yet before the Lord." And here, we find the Lord condescends to stop, and hold a formal interview with Abraham, who presumes to prosecute a true horse-jockey banter with God Almighty; and when terminated, they part, upon their usual familiar, friendly terms, each going, leisurely, about his own business.

In chapter 19, verse 1st, it is written, "And there came two angels to Sodom, at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. And he said, (to the two angels) Behold now my lords, turn in I pray you into your servant's house" &c. "And they said, nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did *eat*." Here then, we find two of the three *men*, alias, angels of God, alias, shadows, who, in the preceding chapter, are said to have *conversed* and *ate* with Abraham, eating also with Lot; and that they, after God determined to *go down* to Sodom, to *learn* the truth of what he had *heard* of it, "turned their faces—and went toward Sodom." It seems, therefore, that they must have lost a companion upon the way, or that they left him to personate God, in the aforesaid conference with Abraham.

That Lot, a roving, Arab herdsman, with his many thousand cattle, and an army of domestics, requiring a territory for their accommodation, and who, a little while before, is said to have pitched his tent *toward*

Sodom, (not built his *house* therein) should have been thus cooped up within the gate of the city, with no other household than his wife and two provident and precocious daughters, who were in the oddest of all predicaments, that of married virgins, as in Gen. 19, 8 and 14, is a circumstance, apparently, absurd enough for second-adventists to believe. But perhaps you are, this moment, meditating a retort, in the following language, 14, 12. "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." And yet, before you shake your sides to lameness, with laughter at your conscious victory, just take a peep at what Josephus says about the same event, viz: "Now when the Sodomites joined battle with the Assyrians, and the fight was very obstinate, many of them (the Sodomites) were killed, and the rest were carried captive; among which captives was Lot, who *had come* to assist the Sodomites."

But to say another word or two, of those ministering angels, or spiritual *messengers* of an *omnipresent* God. How strange it seems, that they shall have found occasion to revise their cogitations—to reverse their predeterminations, or expose themselves to personal abuse, from a licentious and beastly populace, whom they had the power, as it would clearly seem, to blast with blindness, paralysis or death; according as their almighty pleasure was inclined.

And do you deem it other than miraculous, that Lot shall have offered, so unnaturally, to sacrifice, his two *virgin* daughters, (who, by the by, were already married) to the diabolical concupisence of a countless

multitude; and, especially, that such an offer shall have been still more unnaturally rejected?

We further find what curious things those apparitions were, who, having been repeatedly transformed, and retransformed, from men to angels, and also physically employed in dragging forth the loitering family from destruction, were, finally, in consummation of the strange, unnecessary metamorphoses, sublimated to an individual God, whom Lot thus ventures to address: "O, not so my *Lord!*" And then proceeds to banter him about the place of his retreat, and with as good success, as did his uncle Abraham, in the former case; although the bargain turned out less profitably than Lot had probably expected: For the record says, he soon left Zoar, for the mountain, where it is reputed that the patriarchs of Moab and Ammon were more miraculously, than immaculately, begotten.—This is, nevertheless, explicitly contradicted by Josephus, who says, "There (in Zoar) it was that he (Lot) lived a miserable life, on account of his having no company, and his want of provisions."

With these remarks, which are not a tythe of those demanded by the absurdities of the record, but which are all, our alloted opportunity will allow, we shall pass, with but an occasional criticism, to the story of the Hebrew exodus.

At Gen. 20, 1, we find that Abraham sojourned at Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur, which appears somewhat difficult of apprehension; since both the latter places are some miles to the south of the former. It must have been, therefore, quite a supernat-

ural circumstance, that Abraham shall have lived at Gerar, and, at the same time, many miles south of it. In this chapter, we also find a repetition of Abram's farcial denial of his connubial relation, and again, hypocritically, passing off his wife as his sister, with the intention of prosecuting a successful fraud, or basely preserving his own skin, at the expense of his wife's chastity. A dilemma, it would seem, that both God's power and warm affection for his favorite, should have prevented. Nor would it have required, that we can see, a greater miracle, than that which did prevent Abimelech's intended intercourse.

Of Hagar's repudiation from Abraham's family, it is written, Gen. 21, 15, "And the water (with which Abraham had supplied her) was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bow-shot: For she said, Let me not see the death of the child." And again, verse 18, And God said to Hagar, "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him in thy hand," &c.

This narration, when fairly interpreted, presents a most singular phasis.

We find by biblical chronology, that Ishmael was eighteen years old at the time of Hagar's repudiation; and therefore, in all probability, a very great baby, to make such childish work with; especially, that he lacked but two years of the period, at which the Hebrews were made to wield the war-club. And do you think that Ishmael's ghost, yet conscious of its former patriarchal dignity, would deem it flattery, to see this

item of its base biography? But this is supernaturalism; and therefore spiritually true, though literally as false as Satan's war in Heaven.

In the last verse of the present chapter, we read, "And Abraham sojourned in the Philistine's land many days."

An attempt to reconcile this with its context would be met with no little difficulty. For we find the places of Abraham's residence, after his return from Egypt to Canaan, to have been first, the plain of Mamre, near Hebron, where he remained until the destruction of the cities of the plain; when he is said to have journeyed from thence toward the south country, and sojourned in Gerar; and thence to Beer-sheba, or the place of *profanity* between Abimelech and himself, and where he appears to have been at the close of this chapter. And the following considerations are found to embarrass the consistency of the text, viz: All the forementioned places are noted in biblical maps, and asserted by Josephus, to have been within the limits, and constituting a part, of the country called Canaan, or Palestine. Therefore it entirely fails of being historically true, that Abraham ever resided in the land of the Philistines at all. Beside, Gerar and Mamre appear to have been convertible terms; hence we find the location spoken of as Gerar, or Mamre. Hence Abraham's journey from the one place, to the other, must have been an extremely short one!

Omitting to notice the several particulars of the senseless fable, contained in the 22d chapter, it should be deemed sufficient to remark of God's project to

tempt Abraham, or, as more appropriate, to test the measure of his faith, that, were man the arbiter, some such trial might be plausibly prosecuted, in order to develope satisfactory confidence of the fact. But how contemptibly absurd, when Omniscience judges in his stead; which needs no testimony to a fact, that must have been an item of the aggregate of infinite contemplation. And yet, this question being of a Jewish god, I quit the point, in utter hopelessness of success.

Again, Gen. 24, 29. "And *Rebekah* had a *brother*, and his name was *Laban;*" and at 29, 5, "And he (Jacob) said unto them, (the three flocks of sheep of course, since no persons are said to have been there) Know ye *Laban*, the *son of Nahor?*"

At 24, 47, we find the following: "And I (Isaac) asked her (Rebekah) and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bear unto him." Again, at 29, 12, "And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son." The plain state of all which is, that Abram, or Abraham, and Nahor were brothers, and married their nieces, the daughters of Haran. That Isaac, the son of Abraham, married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, and grand daughter of Nahor. Pursuing therefore the foregoing relationship, in the next or second degree. And that finally Jacob, the grand son of Abraham, married Leah and Rachel, the daaghters of Laban, or grand daughters of Bethuel, and great-grand daughters of Nahor, the same relation being here pre-

served in the next degree. And here we leave this subject to be reconciled, in its several parts, by whomsoever, that can command the leisure and ability.

Our opportunity not permitting us to dwell upon secondary topics, we are constrained to pass innumerable absurdities without remark; such as Jacob's curious device, to defraud his father-in-law out of the produce of his cattle; Rachel's theft of her father's household gods; Jacob's meeting God's angelic host at Mahanaim, or place of angels, near the middle of Palestine, whence he "sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother into the land of *Seir*, the country of *Edom*," &c. &c. And wherefore he shall have sent messengers the distance of a hundred and forty miles, and into a government entirely beyond his contemplated residence, simply to report his childish fearfulness of his brother, Esau, whom he had already succeeded in defrauding of his birthright and his father's blessing, seems to have been left to the discovery of second-sight.

"And Jacob was left *alone;* and there wrestled a *man* with him, until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he (the *man*) said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And he (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," which, it seems he did; and therefore "Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Now, do you think that this adventure be-

tween Jacob and God Almighty, in the form and physical character of humanity, actually, or literally occurred?

Does it not seem most strange, nor less contemptible, that such puerile notions of a Deity shall ever have prevailed among mankind, as that he banters, speculates and wrestles with his creatures, as man with man, or rather clown with clown? And these are beauties that religious Faith would wed and hug, as though they were the very life of paradise it hopes for.

And is it probable, seeing there was no miracle in the case, that Jacob pursued his journey, so immediately and well, with an unreduced luxation of his thigh, by which it seems, however, God made him permanently a cripple? And was it really generous in God, to leave his friend in such predicament?

The story of Dinah's ravishment is too absurd to pass unnoticed; and yet we cannot stop to pay it half the compliment it deserves.

Chronologically, Leah was given to Jacob in the year 1753 before Christ; and Dinah's ravishment perpetrated in 1732, B. C. If, therefore, Reuben, Leah's eldest son, was born one year after the former date, he will have been nineteen years old, at the time of his sister's insult.

And if we take the case of Isaac, as a precedent of the age, at which infants were, at that time weaned, we shall have Simeon to be near five years younger, or fifteen, at the uttermost, at the period above alluded to; and, by the same rule, Levi, Leah's third

son, would have been but ten years old. And yet, we are bound to believe, (the story of Ishmael to the contrary notwithstanding,) that these two *infants*, "Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each *man* his sword, and came upon the city *boldly*, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor, and Shechem his son, with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out." But the gist of this affair is not yet exposed. For, by the rule adopted for the interval between the births of children, Dinah must have been at the time in question several years unborn; And, at the most accommodating calculation, she could not have exceeded four years. Rather young to have been the subject of that species of abuse! Nor ought we to omit the expression of our deepest cantempt for the fraud, these children of God practiced upon the credulous House of Hamor.

Passing over the story of Joseph and its connections, with the frank avowal, that, with all its faults, (and they are as numerous as even Scepticism could wish,) it is, nevertheless, particularly creditable, amongst its baser relatives, we will sit down, deliberately, to the task of criticising the wonderful story of the Hebrew Exodus.

And first, of the course of miracles instituted by God, in order to induce Pharaoh to release the Hebrews from bondage. We find at Ex. 1, 22, a decree of Pharaoh, "That every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river," and that Moses was preserved by a breach of it, while Aaron being born four years earlier, escaped its application. Several entire chapters

of this book are appropriated to an account of miracles—wrought by God and the Egyptian sorcerers—a contest most obstinately and successfully prosecuted, for one, wherein the parties were so amazingly unequal. We find, for several trials, that God's advantage was unessential; until, at length, he came to the finer work of making lice, to which it seems the gross machinery of the sorcerers was not adapted.

And yet we think it strange, that those magicians should have failed, at all, even against the Deity, with the power they are admitted to have had: For it seems that nothing less than Omnipotence could make a frog. In this case, therefore, the admission is too little or too much—since he who could really produce a frog, could scarcely fail to make whatever else he might intend. And then this whole parade must have been no better than a farce, or fiction, whilst, if miracles were possible, a single one, and less than these, had it been wrought on Pharaoh's obstinacy, to *soften*, not to *harden*, might have superseded all this catalogue; and answered quite as well, except the *nice* excuse God found in Pharaoh's obstinacy, for damning him most heartily.

Another striking inconsistency, in this old, witless tale, appears in this. Notwithstanding God had, already, turned all the waters of Egypt, to blood, so that "the fish died, and all the river stank," yet it is said the magicians did the same with their enchantments. And we ask what waters, not already changed to blood, they could have found, on which to operate? And again, while Egypt was so immersed in frogs, as

that they croaked and skipped from kneading-trough to oven, how was it accurately determined that the magicians had also made their share? And then again, the strangest oversight is here. The hail, most wonderfully thick and large, destroys both man and beast unsheltered, and also, all of living vegetation, except in Goshen, where the Hebrews were: And yet the locusts came; nor were restrained from eating up the last and least green vestige that remained, throughout the whole of Egypt.

Another oversight appears in this. That God, having sent a murrain, of which all the cattle of Egypt died, he then sent, thoughtlessly, a storm of hail to do the work already done. And still, as though he were forgetful, or insane, he swears to smite the first born of the whole, upon the evening of his memorable passover.

But what insufferable slander should we deem the following, were it of any other, than a Hebrew god! Ex. 12, 13. "And the blood (upon the door-posts) shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you (the Hebrews) are; and when I *see* the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." What could be said, in deeper derogation of God's omnisciency, than that he should need such bloody signal, to save him from mistake? And what worse slander of his justice, than to charge him, as in 11, 2, of having said to Moses, "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of sil-

ver and jewels of gold;" except that he shall have been accused, as in verse 3d, of directly participating of the fraud, by "giving the people (Hebrews) favor in the sight of the Egyptians?" Or, as in 12, 36, that he shall have given "the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians."

It was entirely unnecessary that the writer of the pentateuch should have revealed the aforesaid slanders of his god, since fraud and inconsistency are consonant with his general character; and that, beside, the Egyptians would never have been thus defrauded by their *slaves*, had not their stupor been miraculous.

And again, verse 37, "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, beside children."

Upon this extraordinary item of Jewish history, our first object is, to establish, by a careful comparison of testimony, and an unprejudiced, and even liberal computation, the most probable number of persons and animals, included in this memorable exodus.

First then, we find several biblical declarations, more or less explicit upon the point in question; our text being first in order. And next in order is Ex. 1, 46, "Even all they that were numbered (of an age fit for war) were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty." And also as enumerated by tribes, 2, 32, "These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps, throughout their hosts, were six hundred thousand, and three thou-

sand, and five hundred and fifty. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel;" they not being included, more than women, in the list of warriors. And in corroboration we may be allowed to introduce the testimony of Josephus; who says: "Now the entire multiude of those that went out, including the women and children, was not easy to be numbered, but those that were of an age fit for war" (from twenty to fifty) "were six hundred thousand." If, therefore, we adopt the number explicitly given in the Scriptures, we have first, of the class of warriors, 603,550, who were of an age between 20 and 50 years. Nor can there be found either fact or reason, against there having been an equal number of coeval females, or 603,550. And of both males and females, above and below the foregoing numbers, (seeing that 120 years were established as the period of human life,) it must be sufficiently liberal to estimate them at an equal number, or 1,207,100; to which the Levites are yet to be added. To this point we find at Num. 3, 29, that, "All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of the Lord, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand;" to which should, most reasonably, be added as many females, making an aggregate of 44,000. Which several numbers, being added together, amount to 2,458,200 as the least probable aggregate of persons, concerned in this event; not including the indefinite "mixed multitude, that went up also with them." And of the flocks and herds, they are said to have

driven forth, it would be erroneous to say, as in Ex. 12, 38, that "there went up with them even very much cattle," unless each family possessed a number of animals of all sorts, double that of its human individuals. And even this with them, both for food and sacrifice, and also, stocking Canaan in the end, would be a state of poverty indeed. It is, therefore, more than generous, to compute their number thus; or at 4,912,200, which, added to the aggregate of persons, is, 7,374,300 individuals, of both men and beasts, going out together, from the land of Egypt. And here, we are met by a difficulty, not very easily surmounted, viz., the surprising expedition with which they marched from Rameses to the Red Sea, i. e. a distance, by the biblical map, of about one hundred and twenty miles in three days, and that too, through a district, of which Josephus says, "And, indeed, that land was difficult to be traveled over, not only by armies, but by single persons."

Now, we find no intimation, that the manner, or rapidity of the Hebrew's march, ~~were~~ miraculously assisted, whatever other circumstances may have been thus modified. These, therefore, are subjects of lawful criticism; which may be handled alike, *without mittens*, and without the guilt of blasphemy, however justly chargeable with heresy.

To the validity of the record, that these 7,374,300 individuals actually commenced their march from Rameses, on the morning after the passover, and, more especially, harnessed, or by fives, and at evening encamped at Succoth, a distance of about forty

miles, there is at least one very obstinate objection, viz: That, in that form of march, admitting, them all to be well disciplined soldiers, and proceeding in line, allowing two feet for each platoon, they would have extended, from front to rear, but little less than nine hundred miles.

And, admitting the eligibility of the country, and that they really marched in platoons of forty individuals abreast, they would still have occupied a distance of one hundred and eleven miles; at which estimate (whereby we yield eight hundred per cent of our rightful advantage) the case would, then, stand thus. The first platoon having commenced its march, at Rameses, and proceeded at the quickest rate of military progression, would have required twenty hours of incessant marching, to reach its destined Succoth. And yet, being followed by the rest, in the manner indicated, but little more than a third of this living immensity will have started. And ere the last platoon can have removed a step from Rameses, the first must have been nearly at the sea, and have been marching at the very swiftest rate, and unremittingly, but little less than five whole days, or from sunrise until sunset each. Hence, the rear platoon would not have reached the sea, until near the close of the tenth day.

It is, therefore, apparently impossible, to reconcile the story, with the circumstances it inevitably involves.

Another objection here, importunately obtrudes. Did Pharaoh repeal the prudent ordinance, from which Moses, in his infancy, so marvelously escaped?

If so, why has Inspiration neglected to reveal it, and hence afford another hook for Scepticism to hang upon? And if not, the conclusion is resistless, that Moses was the youngest Hebrew living (some rare evasions of the law excepted) at the time of this strange exodus.

And still another, somewhat unyielding difficulty comes up, from out this fertile mass of tradionary rottenness.

We find the Hebrews to have numbered two millions, four hundred fifty-eight thousand and two hundred. And that this immense population shall have proceeded from the seventy Israelites of Jacob's tribe, is what we should sooner chaw upon, than undertake to swallow whole.

Allowing these seventy persons to have doubled each twenty years, during the period of their residence in Egypt—which is not only a more rapid increase, than a state of cruel slavery, would justify, but than any other history has ever recorded, the whole number at the time of their exodus would have been fifty-five thousand six hundred and eighty. Or a little more than one eleventh of the Hebrew warriors.

And still, to doubt that this is veritably God's revelation of a literal occurrence, is deemed unpardonable heresy, for which its subject should be physically kicked, and spiritually damned.—At least, so seems *good* orthodoxy to consider it; and wonders that God should be so dilatory, in his almighty retribution.

And here, at the threshold of our inquiry into the absurdities of Judaism, our already expended oppor-

tunity admonishes me that a close of this discourse is indispensable. And hence the residue of this Hebrew miscellany, compiled of fabulous traditions, senseless theology, exagerated, partial civil-history, moral allegories, tracts and dogmas, with much sublime and graphic poetry, must pass untouched, and scarcely pointed at.

However discourteous, or even diabolical, it may be deemed by Christien Superstitionists, I am, nevertheless, constrained, in obedience to my deep contempt of its recorded, superstitious fatuities, to pass over the entire book of Leviticus, with this single critical remark, viz: That Reason may fret herself to madness, before she finds a mode of reconciling its formalities with any higher views of God or Nature, than those, a savage Superstition would engender: And, as contrasted with Gospel principles, must have been the senseless institutions of a different God; or else a stranger thing must be admitted, than that of seperate Gods, for Jew and Christian; I mean, the acquisition, by the Jewish one, of so much wisdom and consistency, as would constitute respectable humanity!

Of Deuteronomy I would say more, and less contemptuously, were not my opportunity expended. But as it is, I may venture upon a single question. In contemplation of the Jewish, civil code, do you feel disposed to its adoption, as a substitute for that you have; or its author, as your executive, rather than elect one from among yourselves? Or rather, do you not most heartily contemn that antiquated, bloodless mummy, that literary death's head, that Platonism

has lugged along, to frighten fools and children with.

Of God's extreme civility to Joshua, much comment might be divertingly expended, were it admissible; nor less than volumes upon the book containing his biography. But we can only stop to ask, if you believe God taught such bungling astronomy, as this stupid fable indicates? Or that he was so lame in *almighty* calculation, as to adopt a plan, for Joshua's benefit, by which the world must have been physically deranged, instead of a dozen others, not less efficient, and that common-sense would sanction!

Upon the farce, (Judg. 6, 37) between God and Gideon, about the miraculous bedewing the fleece of wool, I would not even waste contempt.

What strange unnatral thing, was that old giant, Sampson, whose strength, so commonly of flesh and bone, resided so entirely in his hair. Nor was Delilah's method to effect her object, less odd than Sampson's constitution!

In the 11th chapter of Samuel, we find the history of an event, although not reputedly miraculous, apparently, too superhuman to have been otherwise accomplished. We are here told, that messengers were sent from Jabesh Gilead to Gibeah, soliciting the aid of Saul. To whom he replied, "To-morrow, by the time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." And so punctual was Joshua, that he collected, from all Israel and Judah 330,000 warriors, (in no time) and marched them in a single night, a distance, by any practicable route, of at least 60 miles, and fell upon the enemy at Jabesh, before sunrise, the next morning. And thus stands the character of the objects of religious faith

LECTURE VI.

OF THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE GOSPEL.

Suspect not your humble servant of standing here, as a malicious impugner of Christianity, or its adopted oracle; nor charge me with insincerity, while I, emphatically, avow my preference for the Gospel, whether of style or sentiment, to any other tract, of human, or superhuman, origin. And yet, to yield entire assent to its utter infallibility, is not consistent with my present views. Nor is it dissonant with its own explicit teaching, that we should, not merely adopt opinions honestly, but that we should carefully test them, by the exercise of reason.

Not having a moment's opportunity to spare upon a preface, we may claim to be excused that want of etiquette; and, therefore, unreproached, fall, warmly and abruptly, at our work.

Of the origin of Christianity, we are too poor in historical evidence, to forego the use of much hypothesis; and hence, we hope for pardon, for its subsequent adoption.

That Christianity is quite as old, as itself has claimed, (and we doubt not older still) should be, at once, accorded to all its advocates, who hope to make it their advantage.

Our first hypothesis is this. That Christianity originated in Platonism, or, indeed, is but that, successively and variously modified.

And, in support of this opinion, we adduce the following circumstances.

Plato is universally known, where learning has been taught, as the Grecian prophet, or man of God.—As having amplified, as well as mystified, the theological crudities of his teacher, Socrates; and finally wrought them into an elaborate system of incomprehensible Spiritualism, which we assume to have been adopted bp the Jewish sect of philosophers, denominated Essens, of which Philo appears to have been an eminent disciple.

Platonism was promulgated, in Greece, a little less than four hundred years before the Christian era, and became the uncontested criterion, or test, of all existing literature, until Aristotle's almost superhuman strength pulled the academic from the clouds, and used him up as condiment to common matter.

That Platonism, introduced thus early into Greece, should not have found its way the little distance from Athens to Judea, some time before the Christian era, is too unnatural to be the subject of a doubt. And history explicitly informs us, that this philosophy was inculcated in Judea, during the reign of the Ptolemies, and imported from the Alexandrian school.

And still it could not have retained its name of Platonism, among the Jews, or Josephus would, most certainly, have noticed it; and therefore it must have had some other epithet.

It cannot well be doubted, that the Jewish sect, called Essens, from its character and habits, was identical with Platonism.

And yet, its origin is, historically, a mystery. This sect is unquestionably referred to in the apocryphal writings denominated Maccabees, more than 160 years before the present era. And Josephus, who makes no reference to its origin, says it had existed for a long time, previous to the date of his writing.

We are also informed, that Philo, the learned Jew, was a most devout disciple of new, or modified, Platonism, or Eclecticism, which, in their time, appear to have been convertible terms, and that he was, as before remarked, a member of the sect of Essens also.

Having thus assumed what it is impossible, at this long after time, to prove, that Platonism was called Essenism in Judea, we will now proceed to test its claims as mother of Christianity.

Josephus informs us that the sect of Essens existed in his own time; and gives the following account of their religious principles and conduct.

They hold that all things are best ascribed to God. That man consists of body and soul, the first corruptible, the last immortal; and that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for. That, though they send presents to the temple, they offer up no sacrifices, but have more pure lustrations of their own;

(or sacrifices of the heart) on which account they are prohibited the temple, and therefore sacrifice, or worship, by themselves.

They also live a better life than other men, and addict themselves entirely to husbandry. They excel, to admiration, all other men in virtue; theirs not being common virtue, but real righteousness, and such as never hath appeared among others, either barbarian or Greek, not even for a little time, and yet it hath long endured among them. They have all things in common; and stewards are appointed to distribute equally to all, according to their necessities.

They reject pleasure, as an evil, but esteem continence and conquest of the passions as virtue. They choose not to marry, and only consent to it, on the principle of necessity, in perpetuating the species. They guard against the laciviousness of women, of whose fidelity they are suspicious. They despise riches, and are communicative to admiration. They have no one certain city, but many of them dwell in every city, and wherever they are, they partake of whatever they need, as though it were their own; and therefore carry nothing with them, when they travel into remote parts; though still they take their weapons with them, for fear of thieves. They neither discard nor change their clothes or shoes, until they are entirely worn out, or torn, to pieces. They neither buy nor sell between each other, but make such exchanges, as will best accommodate; and are allowed to take from each other, whatever they may need, as though it were their own. Their extraordinary piety con-

strains them to keep a strict silence about profane matters, until sunrise, employing their time, meanwhile, in prayers and supplications, when they go, industriously and faithfully to their several employments. They are fond of clothing themselves in white veils; and punctilious in the practice of bathing their bodies in cold water. They are particular to have grace said before and after meals, praising their God as the author of the benefaction. They permit no clamor, nor disturbance, to pollute their houses, but permit every one to speak in his turn. They are eminent for sobriety and fidelity, and are ministers of peace. They dispense their anger with perfect justice, and restrain their passions within proper bounds. They condemn swearing as being worse than perjury, and hold their mere word more binding than an oath.

They study attentively, the writings of the ancients, and choose from them, whatever they deem most advantageous to their souls and bodies. They do not admit their proselytes to full membership, at once; but adopt them on trial for a year, presenting them, at the same time, a hatchet, a girdle, and a white garment: And if they succeed in their observances, to the satisfaction of the sect, they then participate of the waters of purification. They are so strict observers of the seventh day, as a day of rest, that they not only refrain from their ordinary labors, but prepare their food beforehand, that they may avoid even the kindling a fire. They believe, like the Greeks, in a future spiritual retribution—that the souls of the just retire to a state of extatic happiness, while those of the wicked are subjects of an endless torment.

We find, at the commencement of the present era, that there were three prominent philosophic sects, as they were called, among the Jews; but which, with us, would be denominated religious sects. These were the Pharisees, or disciples of Reason, despisers of luxury and ostentation; respecters of age, believers in spiritual immortality, and future reward and punishment, according to the virtuous or vicious character of the recipient. They believed that all things were governed by fate, except the actions and thoughts of mankind, which they considered free.

The second sect was the Saducees, or aristocrisy; disbelievers in immortality, and strict observers of the Mosaic law.

Of the third sect, or Essens, we have already spoken.

Now, of these three sects, we may very reasonably conclude, judging by the manner in which Josephus treats them, that the Essen, was a very numerous and popular sect, as late as seventy years after the reputed birth of Christ, or near forty years after his crucifixion. And, therefore, were not this the sect, known, subsequently as Christian, a most singular phenomenon is thus developed in the fact, that there is not a single reference, within the pages of the Testament, to such a sect, nor even to such a name.

On what principle, therefore, except the one suggested, can this anomaly be accounted for? By what strange, yet secret, providence or catastrophe, did such a numerous and interesting sect become, so suddenly, extinguished? Indeed, we find the eulogy of

Josephus to have been written near forty years after Christ's reputed mission; and still this sect existed.

And whoever shall carefully compare Josephus' account of it, with the apostolic Acts, and yet is unconvinced that Christians and Essens were identical, must, we think, be blinded by his prejudices. There seems, in truth, no chance for reasonable dissent.

But, not having time, at present, to note the particulars of their agreement, I must, therefore, leave you to make the examination for yourselves, with this additional suggestion.—That, in forming your conclusion, you will make all proper allowance for want of uniformity, that an admission of successive modification would demand.

On account of the barrenness of our subject, in the article of positive testimony, upon the question of the origin of Christianity, we are thrown upon the embarrassing resource, of relying upon negative circumstances, as evidence in our own behalf. And, to this point, but a few moments can be appropriated.

First then, of Philo, the Jew, who was born several years before the Christian era.

Whilst he talked familiarly of the Logos, or wisdom of God, as having planned the universe, and superintended its phenomena; and as being adequate and available to man's extremest temporal and spiritual good, we still hear nothing of this miraculous reformer, denominated Christ, or God incarnate. Nor yet a hint of Christian reformation, nor its wonderful, or miraculous associates. And that no opportunity for information, could have been more favorable than

his, is evinced, most clearly, from the several circumstances of character, situation and cotemporality. The latter circumstance being fully established, by the historical fact, that in A. D. 42, or eight years after the reputed crucifixion, he was selected by his countrymen, as embassador to Rome, being esteemed the most learned and eloquent of his nation.

Now, do you think it, at all, reasonable, that the most literary and popular scholar in Judea, and living cotemporaneously with so extraordinary a personage, as Christ is represented to have been, and necessarily, from his situation, an attendant spectator of more or less of the extraordinary phenomena, said to have accompanied his supernatural mission, and what is more, a brother Jew, by birth and parentage, would have observed, in all his writings, so profound a silence, as he appears to have done?

If so, it can scarcely be disputed, that your prejudice has stupified your reason.

Plutarch comes next, to tell the world of his reproachful ignorance, or willful, base suppression of the truth: For, in his ample, labored writings, neither the name of Christ, nor Christian can be found. And yet this greatest Grecian scholar of his time, was born but fifty years, after Christ, or but seventeen after his notorious miracles and crucifixion. Nor could he, well, have evaded knowing quite as much of these events, under circumstances no less favorable, as did the Roman Pliny, who, doubtless, has been made to say, while dead, what he never even dreamed of while alive.

We next, presume upon the testimony of Josephus, the eminent Jewish historian, whose ghost is doubtless yet reproaching, with its shadowy scowls, that of every hooded Romanist, that lands on yonder side the river Styx, for having made his book tell lies, of which his living self would have been most heartily ashamed.

This most eminent scholar of his time, whether of Judea, Greece or Rome, we find was born A. D. 37, or four years after the Logos had closed its personal, earthly, mission: And yet, with all this, best possible, opportunity for knowledge, of all his learned countrymen, (Philo, or *Paul*, alone, excepted,) he has observed the strictest silence, unless the best, and most, of modern scholars are entirely mistaken, upon the question of a supposed interpolation in this author's book.

That the single sentence, of all the work, appropriated to this momentous subject, is an interpolation by the Romish clergy, who propagated, unblushingly, the damnable, but church-saving doctrine, that *falsehood is commendable*, whenever it contributes to the interest of religion, is a plausible conclusion, at least.

In corroboration of this opinion, we have that of the most ingenious Christian philosopher of the last century, Father James Henry Bernardine; patronized by Lous 16th, knighted by Napoleon, and pensioned by Joseph Bonaparte: And of whom it should be sufficient praise (were that his sole production) that he wrote the matchless tale, Paul and Virginia.

This worthy, and hence extraordinary father of the Romish Church, remarks, and with quite his usual

emphasis, (Studies of Nature, vol. 2, p 166,) having already, severely, animadverted upon the dishonesty of those early Christian writers, through whose hands the ancient manuscripts had passed: "It is impossible to adduce a more satisfactory demonstration of this ancient infidelity of the two parties" (meaning Christians and sceptics) "than an *interpolation* to be found in the writings of Flavius Josephus, who was cotemporary with Pliny." (One of the greatest scholars in Rome, but silent, we believe, upon the subject in question,) "He is made to say, *in so many words,* that *the Messiah was just born;* and he continues his narration, without referring, so much as once, to this wonderful event, to the end of a voluminous history. How can it be believed that Josephus, who frequently indulges himself in a tedious detail of minute circumstances, relating to events of little importance, should not have reverted a thousand and a thousand times, to a birth so deeply interesting to his nation, considering that its very destiny was involved in that event; and that even the destruction of Jerusalem was only one of the consequences of the death of Jesus Christ? He on the contrary perverts the meaning of the prophecies which announce Him, applying them to Vespasian and Titus; for he, as well as the other Jews, expected a Messiah triumphant. Beside had Josephus believed in Christ, would he not have embraced his religion?"

And this is a quotation from a voluminous work designed especially to sustain the divinity of the Scriptures.

In simple courtesy, we are bound to own that the religious sect, called Christians, has, undoubtedly, existed, and been known by that cognomen, for nearly eighteen hundred years, at least. The question, therefore, next occurring, is, When, whence, and wherefore was its name obtained.

The first occurrence of the name of Christian is said to have been about A. D. 43, or 10 years from the crucifixion; as found in Acts 11, 26, which says, "the disciples were *called Christians* first in Antioch."

This text clearly evinces, from its particular construction, that this name was not assumed, but arbitrarily, and may be tauntingly, imposed upon the sect, as a stigma, intended to reproach it with, like Quaker, Methodist, Holy Roller, &c., and suggested by some objectionable peculiarity in their creed or conduct. And, if the Christian sect acquired its known cognomen thus; must we thence conclude it had no previous epithet, though countless thousands, and almost daily too, are said to have been proselyted to this new, and strange philosophy—this revision of God's first attempt at creed or statute making, for thirteen years preceding. And had Christ been known, throughout Judea, as its human, or superhuman author, and also as its surprisingly, if not miraculously, successful promulgator; would those million proselytes have witlessly relinquished the conscious credit of his name, and stupidly have waited, those ten whole years from his departure, in order that Reproach might taunt them with an epithet?

This would have been strange indeed, were not the

whole an allegory: But then, the name exists, as we have seen, or else the record is untrue, since Saul and Barnabus taught Eclecticism, alias, Christianity, a full year at Antioch: And hence our next enquiry—Whence its name? Nor can we here proceed a step, without hypothesis; and, however weak the crutch on which we limp, 'tis our dilemma, to hobble thus, or not at all.

The first suggestion of our friend Hypothesis is this.

The Gospel is an allegory, containing the very cream of all the known philosophy, at its date; and doubtless written out by Philo, the Eclectic. Nor could Judea have found another Jew, nor the world, perhaps, another man, who could have done the thing so well! But that he could do it thus, we have no doubt, if Fame has not most falsely, nor less flatteringly treated him. We think it breathes his matchless style and spirit; or rather glows with superhuman pathos and benignity, of which he, much more than other men, was master. Nor is this suggestion, apparantly less plausible, than that which makes illiterate fishermen its author. Had such obtained the revelation; they would scarcely have told it thus. Nor has superhuman Inspiration but seldom found its way from God to man, through such a brilliant medium. And hence, and also from the *Logos* that inspired it, and that Philo worshipped as the Son, or second attribute of God—as He of the trinity personified, who planned the world and still remains its supervisor; and who, as both morally preventive and recupera-

tive salvation. Nor can we deem it less than strange, that any careful reader of the Gospel, who knows a thought of Philo's upon the point in question, should possibly evade our own conclusion!

And would you have, at once, a lucid specimen of our author's style, and plain acknowledgment of allegory; read, carefully, what he has uttered by fictitious John in chapter first, of that sublime compendium of all the best philosophy of man, when that compendium was written.

"In the beginning (of the creation) was the Word (Logos, or wisdom of God) and the Word was with (an attribute of) God, and the Word was God," (infinite or omniscient.) "The same (Logos) was in the *beginning* with God. All things were made (formed or planned) by him (Logos or wisdom personified.) And him the Logos, Word or wisdom of God, is firstly made to assume a personality, it allegorically retains throughout the work. Again, "In him (Logos) was life; (being) and the life was the light (moral wisdom, or Gospel truth) of men." Verse 14th, "And the Word (Logos) was made flesh;" i. e. the wisdom of God was personified by the writer, for the purpose of more effectually illustrating it by practical application to the business of human life. As an allegory, we think the Gospel a most transparant and invaluable production; while, as literal history, it is spiritless, insipid and even stultifying; at least to ordinary common sense!

This Gospel, Hypothesis again declares, and consonantly with the work itself, was written for the

Jews, whom Philo, doubtless, wished to benefit, by this superior philosophy; and that he, most ingeniously, however unsuccessfully, adopted allegory to effect his purpose, which only failed, from having met with superstitious, Hebrew obstinacy and bigoted, Mosaic *infallibility*—the natural and inevitable result of a fictitious political Theocracy. And this partiality, or affection, for the Jews, appears to us, much more like Philo, than like God; and, therefore, think it Philo's saying.

That the general character, even of the Old Testament, is allegorical, there can scarcely be a doubt with him, who has attentively reflected upon its moral tracts. The story of Joseph was doubtless fabricated, with the view of practically illustrating the virtue and effects of continence, or self command; whilst that of Job is equally explicit upon the point of pious resignation to whatever a Providence shall dispense. Nor can we imagine a clearer illustration of moral cowardice and its opposite, than is contained in those tracts, or allegories denominated Jonah and Daniel, while literally, they are subjects of derision or contempt. And here, the author of the Gospel found a precedent, sufficient to justify himself. Nor would any other mode, than that of allegory, have promised half as much success, among an ignorant and superstitious race. Nor did he fail, most faithfully, to follow the example. In proof of which we make the following references.

At the fifth chapter of Mark, we find an account of a maniac, which we are unable to interpret in any other manner, than as an allegory.

We think the writer adopted, and most appropriately too, the literal maniac, or one laboring under the disease of insanity, as a most fit representative of him, who yields unqualified obedience to the dictates of his propensities.

He is represented, in the tale, as one, on whom both common and extraordinary means of reformation and restraint had been expended uselessly. In fine, that every mean, except the Gospel influence had been vainly tried.

But that the Logos failed not, even here, of its recuperative and salvatory effect. And what a smudge envelopes us, whenever we most stupidly, contemplate this as literally true—A legion of itinerent, voluntary devils, not only to create, but uncreate to fit this one occasion.

The subject of a trinity of divinities, as deducible from the Gospel, is doubtless also allegorical.

God has been long contemplated as possessed, or rather constitued, of three grand attributes, Power, Wisdom and Goodness, infinitely extended. Power to create—Wisdom to devise, and Goodness to direct the system of the universe. Nor could less than these have ever formed a rational idea of God indeed. Power without design would be nugatory; whilst both power and design might be abortive or disastrous, without direction to a proper end.

Almighty power, or Omnipotence personified, is therefore God the creator, and individual in the human mind—Wisdom, Logos, or omnisciency, is reflectively engendered, or begotten of omnipotence, as indis-

pensible to its exercise; and hence the second of the three personifications that constitute the trinity.—Goodness, or beneficence, is likewise reflectively engendered, or begotten of both power and wisdom, as being also indispensible to the judicious exercise of these; and constitutes the last of these three allegorical individuals, whose aggregation forms the trinitarian Godhead.

Thus have we, or rather our Hypothesis, disclosed, and most concisely too, our notions of the *when*, the *whence* and *wherefore* of Christianity; Nor that without regret, that want of opportunity has thus restricted us.

We are come, at length, where Superstition would scowl us into silence; and that with such acerbity, as should turn the sweetest milk of human kindness into bonnyclabber, viz, to the question of the divinity, or superhuman character of the Gospel.

Here again, we find ourselves upon the negative side of the question, where hypothesis is unavoidable, and plausibility the highest point attainable. And yet, there are numerous facts available, that stand much nearer, than a cousinship, to real demonstration, in favor of our position.

Theology assumes, as evidence of the supernatural character of the Gospel, that it contains superior sentiments, to those the world can have derived from any other source.

This may, nevertheless, have been said much more in honesty than in truth. At least, we apprehend no difficulty in its entire invalidation, both, by extrinsic circumstances, and intrinsic discrepancies.

In this inquiry, we may be excused for calling up the Grecian Socrates, who was born near five hundred years before our era, to testify in our behalf.

Socrates is said by his biographers, to have abandoned all inquiries concerning the origin, and physical phenomena of Nature, for what he deemed the higher, or more important departments of Religion and Morality. Yet, although he neglected, he did not despise physical or natural philosophy. But moral philosophy was the subject upon which he expended his best attention; and wherein his success was so extraordinary, that it was said of him, "That he brought philosophy down from heaven, to the abodes of men." He was fully convinced of the existence of an invisible Creator of the universe, a being in possession of almighty power, wisdom and goodness, and who rules the world by a providence of his own. The existence of this Being he believed was clearly deducible from the system of Nature, and, especially, from the structure of the human frame. And that, as man is capable of reason, its author should be much more amply endowed. That we should no more doubt the existence of Deity, because he is invisible and intangible, than that of other powers or principles, known only by their effects: But he thought the question about the substance of the Deity, unprofitable for speculation; and that it was sufficient that we clearly apprehend his spiritual nature. Though he was educated in polytheism, and sometimes spoke of minor deities, he was still the worshiper of one only God, the Creator of the world, and the Judge of mankind; and to

whose kind providence he traced all human blessings; and maintained, that the omniscient and omnipresent Deity knows everything, and observes every secret thought and action of mankind. And hence our duty to wsrship him with all our powers, (mind, might and strength,) and one, that he most punctually performed, both in public and private; and sincerely believed, that God made especial, divine revelations of himself to his sincere petitioners; and that his holy spirit warned them of evil and aided them in virtue. He taught that man cannot purchase, but must merit, the favor of God; and that, by a blameless life, which is the truest and best service of the Deity: And hence his efforts to abrogate all sacrificial worship, to which his countrymen were obstinately inclined, and to which he became himself an offering. He considered prayer, essential to a virtuous life, and taught his disciples thus to pray. "Father Jupiter," (the Grecian name of God) "give us all good, whether we ask it or not; and avert from us all evil, though we do not pray thee so to do," (or do not name particulars.) "Bless all our good actions, and reward them with success and happiness." He believed in the existence of an immaterial, immortal human soul, of divine original, and eternal destination; and connected with Deity by consciousness and reason. The improvement of mind he considered of paramount importance; and self knowledge its first department; and that he who knew all things else, except himself, was still a fool. He distinguished the soul, as sensible and reasonable; or, as we should say, propensitive and rational.

The soul's immortality he deduced from its dignity, its vitalizing energy, its activity in sleep, and from the nature of God from whom it is derived. He viewed death to the good, as but a transition to a better life, of which his hope was confident and clear, and wherein, he thought, with rapture, of meeting the virtuous of other ages. He was fearless of death and judgment, in the consciousness of having labored after truth, and struggled for virtue; but believed the souls of wicked and licentious men were sentenced to unutterable woe, in a place for the especial retribution of impenitent wickedness. He made religion the foundation of morality: And that, as God wishes men to be virtuous, they should therefore be so. He believed that happiness depended, solely, upon the performance of duty; and the desire of it, he considered as but one of the various motives to the performance of virtue; and thus established an intimate connection between virtue and religion. He had the highest conceptions of the dignity of virtue; and declared dominion over the senses, (propensities) to be the highest state of freedom; and that virtue, only, is true wisdom: Whilst on the contrary, he deemed *vice* identical with *insanity*. See this allegorized in the three first Gospels, Mat. 8, 28, Mark 5, 2, and Luke 8, 27. His yet unsystemized morality was founded upon the only true metaphysical basis, "Do what the Deity" (or His proxy, Conscience) "commands thee." And though he mistook somewhat the character and function of Conscience; he made it an indispensable attribute of the human soul, as a judge and director

between right and wrong. He held, that human practice is qualified by human knowedge; and that, therefore, perfect knowledge would, infallibly, insure perfect happiness. He defined virtue to be the striving to make one's self and others as perfect as possible, and reduced it to the two great principles, Temperance and Justice; the former embracing duties we owe ourselves; the latter, those we owe to others. He defined temperance to be dominion over every sensual impulse; and this he regarded as the basis of all other virtues, and indispensable to the proper exercise of Conscience and Knowledge. He held injustice to be one of the greatest evils; and that perfect justice should be rendered equally to friends and foes; and that men should render obedience to the laws of their country, however unjustly they are administered; and that the golden mean (or middle way between the two extremes) should be carefully observed in every thing.

Thus, you are presented with a summary of a Notice of the great Grecian moralist, to be found in the American Encyclopedia, under its appropriate head; and in which, you can recognize, even at the distance of nearly 23 centuries the great moral luminary—the undoubted prototype of Philo's Christ, who caught its brilliancy, and, as brightened too by Plato's fire, and further burnished by the allegorical inspiration of the Jew, thence reflected its broad and radiant brilliancy, over Europe and the world.

We will pass, without further comment, from Socrates to other equally veracious, and scarcely less

important, testimony; and firstly, call Confucius, the Chinese prophet, and not less ancient than the Greek, to tell what he once thought and taught, of moral principle. And thus he testifies.

That temperance, justice and the minor virtues are indispensable to the happiness of society. That riches, pomp or luxury should be contemned, while the magnanimity, and greatness of soul, which make men incapable of dissimulation and insincerity, should be carefully encouraged: And that a life of reason is incomparably preferable to a life of pleasure, or sensuality. That man possesses a reasoning soul, which he derived from Tien, (God) and that its cultivation and improvement is the highest and most useful employment of man; and as thus improved, should be actively employed, in the improvement of others: And, in order to insure success, in the project of social regeneration, each individual should begin with himself, and thereby add the weight of example to that of precept. We should, first, become that, which we would have others to be; and acquire an indelible love of virtue, and hatred of vice. That a mean, between the two extremes, should be invariably observed, which is the essence of practical virtue. Nor are we willing to dismiss our Chinese witness, until he shall have spoken a single sentence, in his own impressive manner. "I am a man," said he, "and cannot exclude myself from the society of men, and consort with beasts. Bad as the times are, I shall do all I can to recal men to virtue; for in virtue are all things, and if mankind would but once embrace it,

and submit themselves to its discipline and laws, they would not want me or any body else to instruct them. It is the duty of a good man, first to perfect himself, and then to perfect others. Human nature, came to us from heaven pure and perfect; but in process of time, ignorance, the passions, and evil examples corrupted it. All consists in restoring it to its primitive beauty; and to be perfect, we must reascend to that point from which we have fallen. Obey heaven, and follow the orders of him who governs it. Love your neighbor as yourself. Let your reason, and not your senses, be the rule of your conduct: for reason will teach you to think wisely, to speak prudently, and to behave yourself worthily upon all occasions." And here we find an antique brilliant, that has been lately dug from out the long since, mouldering relics of a former time; but which, with little burnishing, reflects the plainest image of the Gospel.

Omitting Plato, to whom our Hypothesis has, heretofore, presumed to refer, though indirectly, the origin of Christianity, we next call up the Stoic Zeno, to tell what he had learned, three hundred years before the Christ, the *Living Word*, was born of Philo's brain, or else adopted from the Zend Avesta.

Of Zeno and the Stoics we learn, that philosophy is the way to wisdom, which is itself the knowledge of human and divine things, and that virtue (or morality) is its practical application to the affairs of social life. That man should aim at divine perfection, as the only way to insure a virtuous life. That Reason governs (or should govern) the whole soul. That

true happiness results from conduct, that is dictated by reason, and harmonizes with both God and Nature. That men should live in conformity to the injunctions of reason or the laws of animal nature. That virtue is the highest good, and vice the greatest evil; the former being the harmony, and vice the discord, of man with himself; and hold to the existence and worship of one God. That the highest virtue consists in self denial, or the perfect control of the animal passions. In fine, the doctrines of the Stoics, at the commencement of the present era, had acquired so near a resemblance to the Gospel, that they were suspected of having been borrowed therefrom.

We would be indulged with the liberty of introducing one more witness to the fact, that religious views even in Pagan Rome, were scarcely inferior to those of Christianity itself, more than seventy years before Christ taught the Gospel.

The Roman Cicero, who was born one hundred and six years before the Christian era, expresses himself thus, (as the translation reads) of God and his worship. "That we ought, above all things to be convinced that there is a Supreme Being, who presides over all the events of the world, and disposes of them as sovereign lord and arbiter: that it is to him mankind are indebted for all the good they enjoy: that he treats the just and impious according to their respective merits; that the true means of acquiring his favor, and of being pleasing in his sight, is not by the use of riches and magnificence in his worship, but by presenting him with a heart pure and blameless, and by

adoring him with an unfeigned and profound veneration.

Having heard the testimony of these witnesses whom we have selected from different countries and at different periods, the last of whom wrote out his affidavit, three quarters of a century before the Gospel was promulgated; will you still believe, that nothing had occurred of God, of piety and morals, from which the Gospel might have been compiled? Or that, as in 2d Tim. 1, 10, Life and Immortality were brought to light, (or first promulgated) through the Gospel? If so, look into the second book of Maccabees, at the seventh chapter, and read of spiritual faith and hope and pious continence; and blush at both your incredulity and our degenerate, heartless mimicry. And here we also find the earliest intimation of the body's resurrection; and having, thus accidentally, fallen upon this curious question of the soul's new tenement, which appears to be particularly deserving of, at least, a passing remark, we are induced to make the following.

No matter how intrinsically absurd the dogma is, since it constitutes an important item of the prevailing spiritualism of the Christian world. It thus acquires a nominal consequence, that entitles it to, either commendation or reproach. And although, like the subject, of which it seems an unapt appendage, like a crutch to him who has neither leg, it is indeed the merest fiction: It has, nevertheless, a name and an existence, at least, in ideality, and has thence a claim to general criticism.

Having admitted the existence of such a doctrine, as the resurrection of the body, subsequently to its natural, or organic, dissolution, our first inquiry should, doubtless, be, after the time and manner of its origin.

And here, again, hypothesis is indispensable, since no positive historical dates, nor declarations, are available to our present purpose.

The earliest evidence of the dogma of a resurrection, among mankind, is doubtless found in the apocryphal book called Maccabees, whose date is assumed to be about a hundred and sixty-seven years, before the Christian era: And hence, must be, at least, so much older than the Gospel. But since we have no earlier intimation, that such a sentiment had become sectarian, as it seems it then was with the Essens, it is plausible, at the worst, to conclude it to have been, at that time, in its infancy, which is all we ask, or need, in our behalf.

More than three hundred years before our era, Plato taught his spiritualism to the Greeks, who at that time exercised a literary censorship, throughout the world; and hence, his doctrines must have been, immediately, coextensive with the spread of science. In these, the world, in which Judea was included, was taught the dogmas of God, of Heaven, the soul, its immortality and certain destination to interminable weal or wo: But not a word about the body's resurrection. And wherefore should Plato have been thus silent, upon a subject so momentous? Because he made the human soul with all the qualities or attri-

butes essential to its immediate translation to another world, and to a participation, also, of its pleasures or its pains: And, hence; a body were, at best, but nugatory.

But this literary Anteus had, meanwhile, reared a Hercules, to lift him from the ground of his enchantment, and break the chain with which he had so grossly and successfully fooled mankind. Yes, Aristotle, the greatest of Plato's pupils, and of his race, contested, so successfully, his master's fallacy, that the soul could move, without machinery, or feel, without corporality, as to make it necessary for the disciples of Platonism to invent the resurrection as an indispensable addition to their former creed. Nor is any thing more natural than this result. For, admitting what it was impossible that Platonists should doubt, that the human soul is inevitably immortal, and yet inadequate to the phenomena of its destination without the aid of physical machinery, it would be an improvidence, with which God should not be chargeable, that such machinery should not be provided. And hence, the body would be finally restored to its former occupant; and that the same, in order to evade the embarrassment of a new acquaintance.

This depredation upon Plato's creed may have been made some forty years after its promulgation, that being about the difference between the ages of these two eminent philosophers. Yet, that of Aristotle's must have been embarrassed by the other's popularity, and therefore slowly propagated. For this result however, we have a period of some one hundred and

fifty-seven years, antecedently to the time at which this dogma is expressed in Maccabees. A time, no doubt, sufficient to effect the changes we have here assumed. And thence, we think the silliest fallacy, next to freedom of the will, originated, and the most preposterous, the world is yet to be ashamed of.

The question of the soul's immortality having, thus far, stared us constantly in the face, it seems high time its impudence was reproved: And as the shortest method, we will make an effort to invalidate the dogma of its existence.

Christianity requires that man shall be compounded of two distinct identities, the body and the soul, of distinct character and formation. To apprehend this subject, even superficially, we must form some, more or less particular, acquaintance with the origin and growth of organic man.

Every individual, subsequently to the first, must, according to any admitted principles of physiology, have been thus developed.

The primitive state of the animal, as an identity, is that of a minute vesicle, containing an unorganized, nearly transparent, liquid, without any other vitality than what is consistent with a secretion from the blood of its parent. But this is not the farthest we can trace its origin. We found it a secretion from the mother's blood, by means of organs which did not, themselves, exist, in the mother's infancy, and hence were also made of blood. This blood was manufactured from the mother's nourishment, and hence, both blood and vesicle were once but bread and cheese.

This vesicle, in which specific animal organism originates is entirely incompetent to commence the process, without a new and vivifying impulse communicated to it by the other parent. Nor is this less true of vegetable, than animal development. From the reception of this impulse a new state of things is instituted. This vesicle acquires the character of an independent being, so far as the transmutation of unorganized, to organized, material is concerned; and, thenceforth, is a living, organized identity, progressively and successively developed, in its various constituents, until the perfect animal is completed, which, however, has not occurred at birth, nor does, until the age of puberty.

We may, therefore, be allowed to ask, At what particular period of this being's life, does it acquire a soul? We think not, while unorganized. And if subsequently, there seems no one so eligible as that of puberty: For, if the soul includes the whole psychology, or mind of man, the inevitable and immediate result of its infusion, must be a clear development, as we usually observe it.

The mind of man, whatever it may be, most certainly, resembles functionality. It bears a strict analogy to muscular motivity, being apparently developed, in a direct ratio of that of material organism, from its commencement to maturity; whence its progress is inverted, and it marches downward, with physical dissolution.

Love of life, has been adopted as a most cogent evidence of immortality. Yet nothing can be more fallacious, notwithstanding its plausibility, with the

superficial observer. Love of life is a propensity, like that of acquisitiveness, or parisimony if you please, and subject to the same regulations; and, as are all the rest, indispensable to the constitution of the perfect animal. Without propensities, neither thought nor voluntary action could be possibly elicited.

Nor is attention, so indispensable to successful thinking, more or less than an active, persisting predominance of some single propensity over the rest. Hence propensities are no less essential to humanity than reason and reflection. For, supposing man to have been unendowed with a propensity to live, or to eat, or in other words without vitativeness, or alimentiveness, and thus, subjected to his present circumstances. What a strange improvidence or inadaptness would be thus presented! A man compelled to live and eat, without a wish for either; and hence, a constant miracle required for these results! Have you not often seen how widely different is the love of money amongst mankind? Nor is the love of life, at all, less different! While one individual would suffer himself to be daily skinned by the butcher, could a new one be recovered in the interval, rather than relinquish his hold on life, another holds this gift so valueless, as to yield it, voluntarily, at the merest threatenings of misfortune. And do you think, that these propensities, even love of life, or reason either, survive the wreck of organism? Then trace their declination from manhood down to dotage; and thence, through imbecility, to absolute fatuity, and then evade our own conclusion, if you can!

With few exceptions, an intellect most vigorous at

50, will have sensibly declined at 80; and sunk to utter childishness at 100. Thence reflection is extinguished, and passion devoured by itself; and the last propensity smouldering in its ashes. The fire of genius, that once outglowed cotemporary humanity, is smothered among the ruins of a demolished architecture. Nor does even memory throw one ray of light upon the mental void, by, even, dreaming of its former self. The external senses no longer respond to their appropriate stimulants, nor preserve the connexnexion between the phenomena of the world and the organ of conciousness We see both propensities and affections, one after another, demolished by the grim destroyer of present forms, and thrown back amongst the common stock, for future transmutation, until nothing remains of this human prodigy, but the mere mockery of vegetation; where the past is forgotten—the present unapprehended—and the future uncontemplated—life itself unvalued, and conciousness of identity extinguished. And what remains, except a breathing organized automaton? And where this love of life, that, so infallibly, attests the truth of heaven and immortality? Gone, like the function of a worn-out dislocated clock, to be revived in the tireless progress of revolving, transmutive permutation.

And here you will allow me to anticipate a question, that Ignorance has already proposed a thousand times, and doubtless will as many more, viz., Wherefore do diseased and even dying persons, not unfrequently, retain their intellects to the very gasp of dissolution? Simply because the brain, in such instances, is not the seat of disease, nor its function other

wise impaired, than that its energy diminishes as it fails to receive its necessary support, from its diseased or dying associate. And thus we dispose of the Socratic phantoms, denominated soul and spiritual immortality.

Whilst a volume would scarcely be sufficient to expose the discordances and fallacies of the New Testament, we are restricted to scarcely more than a single paragraph, and that the termination of our uninstructive, thankless course.

First, of the genealogies of Christ, as recorded by Mat. and Luke. Here we have, for the same period, in the former, 41 genearations, (though Matthew declares them to be 42,) and in the latter 56, a difference of 15. No small difficulty to be surmounted! For if we allow but 41 generations, we have about 49 years for each, or an average of 17, more than are allowed, from Shem to Terah. And if 56 are allowed, we then have an average length of nearly 36, still an excess of 4 years, over the length of those more ancient ones.

It has been, most foolishly, or impudently, said, that this apparent genealogical discrepancy, depends upon the misapprehension of the fact, that one belongs to Jesus and the other to Mary. Why should one have had fifteen more ancestors in its line, of equal length, than the other? And why should they both end in Joseph, unless he were the father of both, instead of neither? And here comes a mouthful for the ostritch stomach of Theology to digest. If Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and not of Joseph, how could he have been related to David or Jesse, by the way of Joseph? Again, did Herod murder hundreds of

children in Bethlehem and *all its coasts*, nor history have blabbed of such demonian cruelty? Did Jesus find Andrew and Simon, as he was walking by the sea of Galilee, as in Matthew, Mark and Luke? Or before he went there, as in John? Did Peter, firstly deny his master, to a maid, while *sitting* without in the palace; and again to another, in the porch; and also a third time before the cock crew, as in Matthew; and at the same time, as in John, make his first denial as he passed in with another disciple, and secondly, to the officers and servant of the court, not a maid, while standing and warming himself? And did Judas, as in Matthew, *cast down* the price of treason, and go and *hang himself*? And, at the same time, as in Acts, purchase a field with the reward of iniquity; and, falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gush out? When the *two* Marys visited Christ's sepulcher, was there and was there not, a *great* earthquake? Or, did none but Matthew deem the thing worth mentioning? Did they come, as in Mat., as it began to dawn, and at the same time, at the rising of the sun, as in Mark? And also, as in John while it was yet dark? Did Mary Magdalene, visit the sepulcher with the mother of James, and at the same time, alone? Or did she do both these, and at the same time have other company also? Did she find the sepulcher closed, and at the same time unclosed? Did she see an angel descend, and remove the stone, and sit upon it; and, also, the stone to have been already removed, and nothing upon it? Did she see the angel sitting upon the stone, without, and at the same time, within? And did she see two angels, and, at the same time, but one? &c. &c—

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

GENIUS OF POVERTY.

A POEM IN TWO CANTOS.

BY AN EXPERIMENTALIST.

1843.

CANTO I.

—

And why should'st thou be scouted, as an imp
Of Satan, and condemned to infamy,
As though thou wert, not less, accessory
To man's depravity, than to his grief?
Thou hast been charged, of old time, as the blight—
The mildew of man's brightest, earthly hopes,
And spoiler of his noblest enterprise;
The stifler of his out-side piety,
(The *sine qua non* of its growth within)
Nor yet, wert named in Eden's catalogue
Of condemnations and delinquences!

Thy biography, were it written out,
And with a Peacock's feather, would almost
Match the Pilgrim's Progress; and, quite excel
The twisticals, of Boz's Oliver,
Which seem too heavy, to have been written,
Entirely, with the plucking of a wing:
And yet, it is no literary trash,
Would find a place in Littell's Museum!

No book produced by mortal intellect,
Save Gulliver's, (for Moses was inspired)
Is so corpulent, with the marvelous,
And yet, those marvels true, as thine would be!
And could'st thou realize the ample fund,
In any currency, but Biddle's rags,
And those, above the *fraction of a dime*,
Or, even, half the copyright *should* fetch,
And *would*, if offered to the Harpers, first,
Thou would'st, as suddenly, unknow thyself,
As did the *Royal-little-Gentleman*,
When knighted, for *deflouring Caroline;**
Which is the punishment, John Bull inflicts,
On knaves, for trespassing on foreigners!

Dids't thou make thy first debut in Eden,
With grandsire Adam, and our grandam Eve,
And other gentry, quite too amorous,
To trust a youthful married woman with;
And yet, escape, withal, the fearful curse,
That fell on other luckless spirits, there;
And, in the artless texture of a leaf,
Become the *small clothes* of the needy pair?
Nor, wert thou, erewhile thus incorporate,
In those primeval, undegenerate times,
Less honored, than thine after substitutes,
Mentioned, only, as *unmentionables!*

---

* The boat, destroyed in the Schlosser outrage.

If these remarks are consonant with truth,
Thou could'st not *then* have had the threatening scowl,
That makes folks, *now*, detest thee so:
For, such a look would have monopolized,
Exclusively, the stock of curses there;
At least, if they had been dispensed by us:
For we were, never, half, so much annoyed,
By any other devil, as by thee!
And strange we deem it, that Omnipotence,
Who did foresee thy filthiness and rags,
Nor less forehear thy murmurings of fate,
And reprehensions of a Providence,
That fails to gratify thy selfishness,
Did not doom thee, in mercy to mankind,
To stop and curse the fiends of Tartarus!

If thou wert promised, in thine infancy,
A day of cloudless sunshine, it was vain:
For, almost ere that luminary rose,
The flame-lit clouds gave counter evidence,
That a storm was rising, to o'erwhelm thee!

The pride of Wealth and its magnificence,
Which oft-times, steals out human hearts and brains,
Looked, scornfully, on thy humble bearing,
And marked thee, as the prey of Opulence,
Together with thy numerous progeny!
And, in spite of Equity and Heaven,
Thou and they and after generations,
Were doomed to infamy and servitude,
As an *Inheritance*, *forevermore!*

And by thy junior, thus in bondage held,
By claim, pretended from Omnipotence,
In vindication of accursed wrong;
As though Benignity would have transmitted,
From its throne, a license for oppression!
Shameless slander of a God of justice,
Who hath, with nicest impartiality,
Dispensed his mercies, equally, to all;
Nor designed the rule should be perverted!

Thy history declares, the time was once,
When all thy caste was stigmatized as brutes,
To feed on *threats*, and grieve in *thankfulness*,
Or suffer scourging for *ingratitude*.
Nor do we lack examples, nearer home,
(We hope Judge Lynch wont hear the allusion)
Of metamorphosing men to cattle;
Though, not exactly, by the *Power Divine*,
By which *hereditary* Kings are made,
But what is nearest in authority,
That of the Federal-Constitution,
Which owns the *equal rights* of all *mankind*,
And therefore deems the *African a beast!*
For else, his freedom is as well secured
By this same Compact, paramount to law,
As that of any yankee-mother's son,
Whose sire, the war-torch lit, at Lexington!—

Glorious Spirit of Seventy-six,
Which did, the fetters, of the black-man, fix,
Through countless generations of his race;

Nor heeded the anomalous disgrace,
Of rearing its standard, in name of God,
And striping its flag, with the negro's blood;
Bestowing its freedom on all our kin,
Whom nature wrapped not, in too dark a skin!
Thus doth Columbia's Charter secure
The *mutual* justice, of *Simon Pure!*
Nor is dominion counter to the plans
Of brawling, nominal republicans!—
With whom, liberty is another name
For downright, political recklessness
Of all the rules a wise Consistency
Has established, for its preservation—
A liberty, that bold Licentiousness
Might feed upon, to gouty corpulence—
That fain, would make Philosophy and Art
Shake hands with Ignorance and Quackery;
And call this breach of Nature's institutes—
This impracticable absurdity,
Sublime, political equality—
A liberty that spurns a guardian,
Though it were a Deity incarnate!
Nor will it yield the insane privilege,
Of being cheated, and imposed upon
By any false pretender, who shall choose
To expend his wit in that direction!

As those ancient chronicles inform us,
Whose veracity must not be doubted,
Thou wert, firstly manacled, where the Nile
Made corn abundant, yet where vassals starved;

Where slaves, by thousands, wrought for one mad lord,
And other millions, for an insane king;
Where princely vanity could gorge itself,
With lumbrous, architect'ral monuments,
Obelisks, Pyramids and Labyrinth,
For Glory, Sepulture and Sacrilege;
Nor grieve at such a reckless sacrifice,
Of human flesh and sinews, as should draw
Tears, from an eyeless, marble monument!

That thou wert, next, enslaved in Palestine,
By those annointed Hebrew Partialists,
That claimed, by contract of the Deity,
The entire beneficence of Heaven:
Nor, like innumerous, modern Christians,
Would they admit a soul to Paradise,
But through the slough, of their formalities!—

Thenceforth, the world, (for such were Greece and Rome,)
Assumed the right to scourge thee at its will:
And tho' that world has met sad changes since,
It has not changed its hate of thee,
Except in few and rare particulars!

Thou art, tho' men have known thee long too well,
A thing anomalous—inscrutable,
And which no single definition fits!
Chameleon like, thou art as changeful
As conscience, fashion and opinion are!
For that which bears thine epithet, to-day,

Might, yesterday, have been called competence,
And to-morrow, with equal justice, wealth.

Like one, who holds left-handed sentiments,
Of Religion, Politics or Morals,
Or like a debtor irresponsible,
Thou art unwilling to expose thy state
Of feeling, or of funds!—
Kind hearted thing!
To be so careful of our sympathies,
As though we had a wish, to waste on thee,
But that thou had'st been drowned with Egypt's Host,
Nor lived, to snarl at Providence so long,
For ills, thy sordidness hath merited!

Thou art as friendless as ophthalmia,
Or Parsimony, Toothache, or the Gout,
And as heartily contemned as Treason!—
And so thou should'st! for rank duplicity,
The vilest trait, in Satan's character,
And e'en in some, who own him not as master,
Has marked thy wanderings, six thousand years;
And yet thou would'st, like most of us, be thought
Possessed of virtues, which were never thine;
And charge on others, want of complaisance,
While thou dost not, one whit, respect thyself!

Thou art the cringing sycophant of Wealth,
Whom, meanwhile, thou pretendest to despise!
Nor can'st yet sustain e'en Honor's shadow,
Without a golden crutch, to lean upon!
Nor is such lameness rare, among mankind!

To imitate Wealth's worst delinquencies,
And play the tyrant, well, with Beggary,
Seems the apex of thy mean aspirings.
Such baseness fits thee, for a paltry slave,
And shapes thy pliant limbs, for manacles!
The ape and mocking-bird excel thee, more,
In principle than art! For they do not,
Select, for imitation, but the worst,
Of all the practical examples,
Of prank and voice, but fain attempt the whole!

Thou art the pander of Licentiousness,
The supple catspaw of thine enemy,
To scratch out nuts, from where 'twould burn its own!
Not much unlike, some talking animals,
Who, being served, (ungrateful fratricides)
Then serve themselves, by sacrificing those,
Who have been catering for their baseness!
Yet thou, with all these stains upon thy hands,
Art no less sensitive, when honor 's touched,
Than though, memory had, to thee, turned traitor,
And left thee unacquainted with thyself!
Or wert a Congress man, or Col. Webb,
To murder folks in *injured manhood's cause,*
While the transaction proves themselves are beasts!
And, were detraction whispered in thine ear,
Thy carcase would, like a percussion cap,
Explode, and let thy *mammoth* spirit out,
To plant a Cypress, on a mad-man's grave!

So much like human nature is thine own,
Thou wilt worship all of earth, that glistens,
Or bears the stamp of Mammon, on its back!
And he, who hath what thou hast sought, in vain,
Hath thy reproaches, and thine envy too!
Meanwhile, thou art vociferously mad
With human folly, for its *love of gold*,
Which, thou sayest, is so idolatrous,
That Elysium would be rejected,
Unless it were a mint, for coining cash,
And, also, Immortality refused,
(Were it a thing provisional,)
If unemployed in counting o'er the trash!

Our answer, to thy charge, must be concise!
We wish it were, both, false and slanderous!

Thou sayest, and thy saying is too true,
(Though, in thy fits of frenzy, for the stuff,
Which Fate determined should elude thy grasp,)
That gold perverts the Law, and smothers Truth—
That Justice cannot hold her scales, so tight,
That *dust* will not disturb its equipoise!
And, lo! thy sense of right is so acute,
(And sharper, much, for its apprenticeship,)
That thy philanthropy calls, loud and long,
To have the *order* of the thing *reversed;*
And *then*, the balance, to thy jaundiced eye,
Would be, most admirably, adjusted!

Thou sayest, also, that the tyrant Wealth
Assumes, too much dictation, and controls,

Disastrously, the fashion of the world,
Which, blindly, runs a jack-a-lantern race,
After the shadow of fictitious worth!
So it does; and so thou would'st, if thou could'st!
Or professions have much, higher merit,
In thy case, than they ever had in ours:
For men, who would be Neroes, if in power,
Are most obsequious, in manacles;
And he, who would live free, or cease to live,
Would be—No! he would *not* be a *master!*

Among thy numerous complaints of Wealth,
Thou sayest it claims honor, not its due,
In rearing all those mighty piles of art,
Whether designed, for worship, or for show,
Whose ruins, yet, attest magnificence,
At which the traveler gaps, staringly,
And wonders, at the human enterprise,
Which could have planned and executed works,
Apparently so impracticable!
Nor apprehends, that these were monuments,
Which superstitious Tyranny hath reared,
In ostentatious show of piety,
Or to inflate the pride of Opulence,
And at a waste of human happiness,
Which recklessness, itself, should deprecate!
In fine, whatever Intellect hath planned,
Or Labor hath, successfully, accomplished,
Beyond the value of a moccason,
Is claimed, exclusively, as Mammon's work;
And yet, from quarrying, to stuccoing,

Not a hod of brick nor mortar shouldered,
Nor a hammer nor a trowel wielded,
Except, by muscles of my luckless tribe!
For Beggary is not available
To the basest projects of a tyrant,
From lack of all, but begging enterprise!—
It is, in truth, too mean to be a slave!

Be it so! Nor would we contradict it!
Yet, what claim hast thou, thou madcap braggart,
To the half a thimble full of merit,
For all the vaunted labor, thou hast done?
Thou would'st have been no less contemptible
And indolent, than those who whittle chips,
And muse upon the unhallowed means,
Which cunning Indolence hath sometimes found
Successful, in replenishing thy ranks,
And most unluckily, from out the midst
Of those whom God hath owned his *noblest work*,
Had not dire necessity compelled thee!
For stubborn Nature is not changed with dress!—
Knaves are the same with epaulette or brand!
Where, then exists thy claim to moral worth,
For doing what thy virtue ne'er enjoined?
We'll tell thee, would'st thou know, and doubtless true!
Where the religious hyprocrite will find,
The blissful plaudit of the Deity;
And that, as Murphy said, of land he owned,
Is not, in fath sir, either here or there!

The chains that gall thee, thine own right hand forged,
And thy servility hath riveted:—

Ask not redress for wrongs, thy baseness sought,
And which, thy tameness hath solicited,
As though *a slave* were written on thy brow!
The faults, thou chargest Wealth and Heaven with,
Proceed, alone, from thy delinquency!—

Have not thy virtues been apocryphal,
And thy professions slandered by thy deeds?
When hath thy servile spirit ventured forth,
In name of Truth, of Heaven and Equity,
And Nature's holy Impartiality,
In gallant contest, for equality?
When hast thou owned the claims of Intellect,
(Immortal spark, from God inherited,
Consciousness, memory, and contemplation
Of principles and joys ineffable,
And for which, only, Paradise was made)
Above the groveling propensities,
Whose base indulgence stigmatizes man
As brother of *the beast that perishes*,
And seems the limit of his enterprise?—
Never! nor ever will, while thou dost kneel,
In humble supplication of the molten god,
Whose *greatest* benefaction is a curse!—

Thy motto is, as it hath always been,
A curse on wealth's unjust supremacy!
And yet, thou hast, immemorially,
Yielded it thine envy and submission!
Nor hast thou ever dreamed, that happiness
Can be attained, through any other means!

And yet, Wealth is a scorpion, to sting
The hand that, covetously, would grasp it!
And had'st thou read the gospels, thou would'st know
That ragged usefulness, in Heav'n's account,
Is worthier than ermined uselessness!—
And that humble virtue, wrapt in sackcloth,
Is still a Goddess, brighter in her tears,
And happier than wealth or flattery,
Or stars or crowns can make Licentiousness!
And so hath God, in equity, decreed!

There is a way *which he* who *runs may read*,
For thee and thine, to be unmanacled,
As sure as mandate of the Deity!
Nor is it, otherwise than, wonderful,
That thou should'st not have sought it earlier,
And broke the chain, by which wealth rules the world!

Thou should'st discard the idol, Opulence,
And worship at the Goddess Reason's shrine!
Her response will teach thee, clear as sunlight,
How thy manacles may be dissevered;
And thine unpitied subjugation,
To the Tyrant, Wealth, forever ended!

CANTO II.

—

Would'st thou break the chain, that binds thee closer,
To Wealth's contemptible idolatry,
Than is the native, Pagan Indian bound
To the accursed Car of Juggernaut?
Discard, forthwith, that slander of the truth,
Which says, that wealth produces happiness;
A plant congenial, but to virtue's soil,
And reared by vigilant cultivation;
Nor still perpetuate thy name and woes,
By wearing Mammon's tinsel livery,
Which cheats thee, of thy cash and credit, too,
And fits thee, for a beggar or a thief!
Descend not to the basest mimicry,
Of Folly's first and worst delinquency,
A gaudy, superficial frippery;
But, frankly, own thy name and character,
And miss the stigma of duplicity,
Which seems, too deeply, graven on the heart
Of man, to be, by reason, burnished out,
Or extinguished by regeneration!

We've said, thou should'st invoke the Pythoness
Of Wisdom's Temple, (who is Reason's self,
Improved by patient, useful discipline,
Amongst earth's real apprehensibles)
To teach thee, how thou shalt release thyself,
At once, from a disgraceful servitude;
And furthermore, how wrongly, thou hast judged
Of Wealth's exclusive aptitude for bliss!

The rule, thou hast adopted for thy guide,
In adding up and balancing accounts,
Between thyself and Mammon's favorite,
Was not proposed by Solomon nor Paul;
But smacks of Parsimony's rule of three,
Which proves, as clearly as the a, b, c,
That *good* for *you* is *better*, still, for *me!*
And thus, thou hast augmented, wrongfully,
Wealth's real happiness above thine own.

Thy mouth is, doubtless, full of verbal proofs,
In form of oathful asservation,
That, of the warp and woof which wealth enjoys,
Thou would'st weave an interminable web
Of most exquisite, earthly happiness—
A Cashmere suit, for every brat of thine!
And so, fell Parsimony promises
To its inimitable self, at least;
And hence it starves, to hoard the magic stuff,
In which, like almost all mankind, it thinks
The very soul of happiness resides!
And, as a most judicious episode,
It steals thy very rags, to clothe itself!

Success, on such a plan, can scarcely fail,
Oftener than would a vigorous attempt,
To lift one's self, by tugging, lustily,
At boot-straps, or waistband of one's breeches!

Nor is Ostentation more successful
Than Parsimony, in the bliss it seeks!
And though, apparently, less groveling—
Less soiled by loam, than by licentiousness,
There's not a vice so reprehensible,
With the exception of Intemperance,
Whose omnipotence is proverbial,
In transmuting manhood to beastliness,
As we think this same ostentation is!
Nor has it 'mongst the foes of righteousness,
Or of mutual, social happiness,
A single, other, fair competitor!

Each follows out the promptings of its own
Indomitable, base propensity,
And would monopolize the world itself,
Were not its pow'r unequal to its ends!
The one, in order to maintain a state
Of base, contemptible magnificence,
For the exquisite glorification,
Of being gaped at by the idiot!
The other, in its fearful providence,
Would miss the thousand curses, heaped on thee,
And, therefore, lives the very mimic
Of the character, it so much detests!
So near together are the two extremes!
What would'st thou profit, therefore, by exchange

Of state and character, with those we've named?—
E'en Beggary, itself, would be insane,
To swop its very worst estate with either!
Each is engaged in vigilant pursuit
Of exclusive, individual bliss,
Which both, remotely miss, and equally:
For Happiness is perched on Reason's shield,
Whose standard is erected just midway,
Between these antipodes of wretchedness,
The furbished, and the furfuraceous:
And, surely, thou dost offer evidence,
Amidst thy lengthened catalogue of faults,
As indubitable as truth itself,
That thou art much less mischievous than they:
And yet, thy virtue, like the most of ours,
Is both negative and apocryphal:
For, that thy guilt is less than theirs is not
From want of inclination, but of power;
Therefore, until thy principles are changed,
Thy miseries, with thy means, would multiply:—
Success would stultify thine intellect,
And indolence destroy thine enterprise;—
So that thou might, successfully, contest,
With human things, the prize of infamy!

Awake! and take a peep at destiny,
As fate hath settled it with human kind,
And as God, in Scripture, hath revealed it!
There, thou may'st measure with exactitude,
The length and breadth of both thy weal and wo;
Nor Heaven, nor Fate, hath meditated ill
To thee; but, to thy moral turpitude!

Thy name, in Christendom, was coupled once,
With saintly and prophetic piety;
And thought to be almost synonymous,
With unsophisticated holiness!—
And who, from choice, became thy devotee,
Was honored as a saint, and deified!
And so he might be now, with little risk
Of multiplying acts of sacrilege;—
For no one knows thee, and detests thee not,
Unless his fast-receding sinciput
Proclaims his irresponsibility:
Nor was it, anciently, a small mistake,
That thine was thought the name of righteousness!
For thou hast not, from thy birth, been better,
Nor more deserving of respect, than now:
Nor was the claim of Lazarus to Heaven,
Improved by his companionship with thee,—
But that he bowed not, in idolatry,
To a *golden calf*, which, interpreted,
Means adoration of a wealthy Fool!

This sacrilege has been, amongst mankind
So nearly universal, hitherto,
That an exception has been ever deemed
A most remarkable phenomenon!
And while thou shalt continue to succumb
To any less authority than God's,
Or Reason's (its admitted substitute,
In all emergencies apocryphal:
For understanding cometh from the Lord,
Or Solomon, for once, mistook the truth)

Thine unbroken manacles will hold thee,
To a servitude, not unmerited!

Nor hath Idleness escaped thine envy,
Whene'r Inheritance enabled it
To riot boldly in licentiousness:
And when reduced to starving nudity,
(The doom Heav'n stamped on its delinquency,)
Thou hast o'erlooked its culpability,
And wasted thy reproaches on its rags!
This truth is clear, whatever blockheads think:
Were not thy ranks repaired by Indolence,
They would dwindle to the merest shadow,
And thine would be recruits of competence!

Thou hast deemed labor ignominious,
As though it were exclusively for slaves;
And that true-freedom's definition is,
Release, from the restraints of usefulness.—
In this thou dost resemble some of us,
Who deem it, clearly, a primeval curse,
That man must be familiar with the soil,
And barter, for his bread, his daily toil;
And rather than appear so ungenteel,
Will practice ev'ry fraud, and sometimes steal:
As though the Deity had branded labor
With his most emphatic malediction,
And the soiling fingers, as a stigma,
Too foul for soap and water to remove!
These are the dogmas of Theocracy,
Inherited by aristocracy.
But, thanks to God and the Revolution;

To Liberty and our Constitution;
This twin inheritance, with worldly wealth,
Too often gained as basely, as by stealth,
Will slip, together, through the grandson's hands,
Or Heav'n has recently revised its plans!

Hebrew Theocracy assumed the right,
To despoil the heretic Canaanite,
Enslave his infants, gorge upon his blood,
In name of Justice, Piety and God.
'Tis aristocracy's calculation,
To succeed as well by legislation.
The one with bigoted temerity,
Would crucify the Christ for heresy:
The other sooner, than resign its place,
Would, doubtless, crucify the human race!
What Theocracy achieved by bravery,
Aristocracy hath wrought by knavery.
One has met deserved retribution,
In the course of civil revolution:
The other's fate, we think we know as well,
And yet, would wait for ballotings to tell,
Which, doubtless, are as unequivocal.
We, surely, have been wandering from our text,
And must have known it, had we not been vexed.
But since we've fully cancelled thy demands,
We'll pass thee over into better hands!

Hark ye, then, to Reason's admonition,
Corroborated by the word of God,
And plainly registered, in Holy-Writ.
And thus we heard—or dreamed that Reason spoke.—

"Desist from Mammon's service, and henceforth,
Appreciate money, at its real worth.
And dost thou ask its value—I reply,
That of the real happiness 'twill buy.
Render obedience to God and me,
Which constitutes genuine liberty.
Not the factitious, the licentious know,
Which works their own inevitable wo;
But one of holiness, without alloy,—
The freedom which the sons of God enjoy.
Thus shall every votary of mine,
Bask in the rays of liberty divine.

"Had'st thou but known and heeded Agur's prayer,
Of Bible specimens, the finest there,
Which shames vain man's loquacious levity,
As much in spirit as in brevity,
Thou would'st have deprecated Mammon's gifts,
No less than thou hast done thy luckless shifts.

"The prophet prays, as warmly, as for health,
To be preserved from Poverty and Wealth.
What can be gathered from a prayer like this,
But that the two are equal foes to bliss?—
And what induction can be plainer seen,
Than that the proper place is one between?
Nor can'st thou, in this instance, fail to see,
That holy Agur and myself agree.

"Heav'n cannot, pecuniarily, dispense
A blessing so exact as competence!
He, therefore, who solicits less or more,
Invokes a curse, possession must deplore:

'Tis, therefore, Competence I will protest,
Alone, can make an earthly spirit blest:—
And though attainable by common sense,
'Tis oft extinguished by improvidence!

"Saint Peter knew, that competence is good,
And who that needs, might have it if he would:
Or he would not, the pious spouse compel
To it, or rank beneath the infidel:
Who supplies not, his house, *hath* both *denied*
His *faith*, in Christ, and duty, to his bride.
The cost of one his penitence may pay;—
The other, doubtless, will provoke a fray.

"'Tis therefore clear, that industry can find
Enough for comfort, if she's so inclined;
And with Frugality, to tend the purse,
Escape, thine own, hereditary curse.
Nor would a prudent votary of mine
Rely on either, but the two combine;
Nor venture on the opposite extreme,
Since Parsimony's curse is not a dream.

"Invoke Temperance for absolution,
From thy deepest and unholiest stain;
And the Deity for resolution,
That, henceforth, thou shalt not relapse again!—
For, of thy sources of replenishment,
Intemperance contributes two of three,
And yet affords as great a compliment,
Or greater, to the ranks of beggary.
Let Virtue, Morals and Integrity,
With *Undefiled Religion*, all agree,

To form thy character, which, though rare
Among mankind, is not at all too fair!

Another source of thy peculiar wo,
Is an unconquerable love of show;
Thine *outside* gilt, thou carest not a fly,
Thine inside, being filthy as a sty!

"Thou hast fed Fashion with thy humble gains,
And been despised and laugh'd at for thy pains:
For Opulence, if mean, will not confess
A fit companion, in thine apishness.
In folly's service, thou can'st never be
An equal match for Aristocracy:
Therefore desist from acting as its tool,
Nor curse thyself, by mimicking a fool!

"The biped, *man*, perchance, may take the whim,
That this courtesy is designed, for him:
But with that *favorite* of Providence,
Who esteems my best suggestions nonsense,
My admonitions have been withheld long since:
And though thou art more tractable than he,
My patience hath been sorely tried by thee!

"'Tis strange, that thou should'st still remain so dull,
With my incessant rapping at thy skull;
Nor, can it be disputed that thy pate,
Unless 'tis human, is but second-rate!—
For, one would think that such repeated polts,
Would have awakened anything but *dolts!*

"Thou dost complain, that thou hast wrought for
wealth!
What else would have as well preserved thy health?
For he can never labor for himself,
Whose life's consumed, in worshipping his pelf;
And yet, wealth's time, employed to count its store,
Might be much better spent in earning more!
And Competence requires but little time,
To calculate its income to a dime!

"Thy sweat hath also irrigated soil,
Not thine!—It cooled and fitted thee for toil!
Thou sayest Wealth can feast on a ragout,
While thou must make a plainer diet do!—
And, hence, thy nether limbs can stub about,
While Luxury's are crippled with the gout:
Nor can it sleep on feathers, half so sound,
As honest industry upon the ground!
Neither hath Wealth effectual defense,
But by eternal, anxious vigilance:
For it hath wings, which it doth sometimes use,
Leaving its votary, dangling from a noose!"

"With these suggestions, of the woes of Wealth,
Thou, yet, would'st risk them, tho' it were by stealth:
For thou dost think, with *human*, silly things,
That thou could'st soar to Heav'n with golden wings!
But, if 'tis true, what Christ and prophets tell,
Such wings soar not, but gravitate to hell:
Nor can they counteract attraction thence,
Unless they're light'ned by Benevolence:

Yet, *men* will risk a journey to that clime,
Rather than spare the fifth part of a dime!

"Although Jehovah to the point hath spoken,
Thou art, like *man*, distrustful of the token:
And, as tho' thine were only *human* sense,
No test will answer but experience;
Nor yet will that, unless it is thine own—
By that of others, little can be known!

Thus would those human egotists declare,
Whose folly is a proverb, everywhere,
(Unless, mayhap, the lunar folks should be
Inclined to approbate their lunacy,)
To whom, I've constant preached, six thousand years,
And vainly, as though asses had no ears!

"Among *this race*, improvement is all fudge;
As trudged the *father*, so the *son* doth trudge;
And when exception offers to the rule,
Its subject is admonished as a fool!

"I'll now leave thee, to thy contemplation
Of my proposals for reformation!—
Heed my precepts—remember Agur's prayer:—
Thou shalt be free, as spirits of the air!"

Montpelier, 1839.

FASHION'S SOLILOQUY.

—

While indulging a recent exacerbation of literary antiquarianism, among the curiosities of my great-great-grand-father's Scrap-Book; I casually fell upon the subjoined *burlesque* of the fashionable monomania, of Louis 14th of France: And for which, as indicated by an autographic mariginal-note, we are indebted to the pen of Pere de Lachaise, the worthy Confessor of that royal friend, and zealous patron, of the delirious ostentation, and senseless etiquette, with which Europe was bedizened, for near a century; and which remains, at least, with the reflecting moralist, a proverbial stigma upon the Parisian, to the present day; And however inapplicable to the good people of Vermont, in the year of our Lord 1839; it may, notwithstanding, claim, of the curious, to be preserved as a literary relic of the seventeenth century.

The following may be received, as, very nearly, a literal translation of the Scrap-Book copy, which is humbly submitted to those who will condescend to read it.

ANTIQUARIAN.

" Reason, that *sour misanthrope*, yet persists,
In her *senseless* contest, for dominion,
O'er those *unfeathered geese*, or *tailless apes*,
Denominated, *by themselves*, mankind;
As though her *monastic melancholy*,
That maddens at the thought of earthly bliss,
And calls man's pleasure all concupiscence—
That would feed his enterprise, with *shadows*,
And pay his weariness, with *hope-deferred*,
Could vie, with my *felicitous* employ,
That pays the laborer with connate joy!
As well may *tasteless* Fountain-water hope,
To supercede *delicious* Alcohol,
Among the children of the *Temperate!*

" Her *vanity* is inexhaustible;
Or she would have, long since, deemed it hopeless,
To force her *whims* on Sensuality,
The true synonym of Humanity;
At least, with those, who bow at Mammon's shrine,
And think, that Wealth makes Man a Demigod:
And these are all the true Nobility,
Among my countless, biped worshippers—
True Pioneers, to that Ostentation,
To which the Mimicry of Man aspires!

Thanks, to the premature development
Of those *exquisite*, *apt* Propensities,
Which are able to descry, *so soon*
And clearly, my superiority
O'er Reason, as the Monitor of Man,

Whose unrestrained indulgence constitutes,
With singular exceptions, now and then,
The most *exquisite, noble* enterprise,
Of this improvement of the Baboon-Race!

" Dame Nature could never have intended
Man, to be the Proselyte of Reason;
For else, his Appetites would have been wrought
Less dissonant with her cold suggestions,
Which, like an Iceberg to the Mariner,
Freeze up the current of fictitious enterprise,
That claims, exclusively, his vigilance!

" Humanity consists of sympathies,
So *very amiably domestic,*
That they commence, and terminate,
Within the circle of *judicious* Selfishness—
Nor, will it, soon, be so *improvident*
To swop the smallest Pleasure, of *to-day,*
For the mere Image of the richest Bliss,
That Reason paints upon *To-morrow's* Map;
So incredulous of her promises,
Which he has, most judiciously, esteemed,
Too *spiritless,* and *fatuous,* to test,
Is that two-legged thing, she calls her Pet!

" Man's proverbial Magnanimity,
Like the Philanthropy, he *practices,*
Forms a Halo, but dimly luminous,
Beyond the circle of his private views—
Within, it shines, with treble brilliancy,

Its focus resting where his *soul should be*,
Disclosing, 'mongst his lesser attributes,
A *Pavonine*,* *noble* Ostentation,
That contemns Reason, as a *Lunatic*,
And promises eternal vassalage,
To *affable* Licentiousness and me!

"That Reason, with her long experience
Of Man's suspicion of her *sanity*,
Should still persist, in importuning him,
Against the protest of his Appetites,
Which are, proverbially obstinate,
To leave those easy avenues to Bliss,
That stark-blind Sensuality can thread,
Unerringly, as with old Argus' eyes,
Ere Juno lent them to the *Peacock's tail*;
Where they, appropriately, represent
The *Moral Vision* of my votaries,
Seems to prove her really insane!

"In spite of her *sepulchral* threatenings,
And yet, without an effort of mine own,
I have entirely, superseded her,
In the *best* affections of human-kind.—
Meanwhile, by turns, she mopes, in sullen grief,
Presently, tornado-like, she blusters,
Nor foams, less madly, than a Cataract,
At Man's supreme submissiveness to me!

---

* Peacock-like.

"But, let her rail, exhort and importune,
Until hoarseness shall have made her voiceless,
And disappointment, grief and weariness,
Shall have shrunk her *Shrewship* to a *Mummy*,
My friends will heed her just about as well,
As modern *children* do their *guardians!*
Dear little *gentlefolk!* how smart they are;
Dame Reason may assail them, if she dare!
And, if she dont get *trained*, I will admit,
That she may *humanize* the *Monkeys* yet!"

Bearing date 1686; and signed *Fouetteur* l'Hommes, or Whipper of Mankind.

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